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Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

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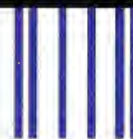
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Peggy Boyer Long



Barack Obama's story became a prism for our collective psyche

by Peggy Boyer Long

Will he or won't he? By the time you read this, you're likely to know. But in mid-January, as we get the issue ready for the printer, we don't have that advantage — despite lots of telephone conversations with and e-mails from Dan Vock, who wrote our cover story out of D.C., Webgrams from any number of sources and early reports by Anderson Cooper.

All we know for sure is that Illinoisan Barack Obama, the state's junior U.S. senator, filed papers with the Federal Election Commission to establish a presidential exploratory committee — and that he'll be home February 10 to fill us in on his decision.

Obama issued an online statement January 16, paid for by his committee, offering assurances he was thinking hard. "Running for the presidency is a profound decision," the statement read, "a decision no one should make on the basis of media hype or personal ambition alone..." (For more, go to <http://www.barackobama.com>.)

I know something else. While it will be easy to dismiss his chances in a White House run — too young, too little experience — it's wise not to. Whether he runs in 2008 or another year, or never, Barack Obama's future contributions to

the nation shouldn't be underestimated.

We have some sense of this at *Illinois Issues*. At least I do. Every editor has made some dumb calls. We all have our excuses. I like to remember, for instance, the New York magazine editor who had to explain later why he rejected the first short story by some guy named Hemingway. Mostly, we prefer to keep such matters to ourselves. Sometimes, though, we can learn from our mistakes.

In late 1994 or early 1995, former state Senate President Phil Rock, a member of our Advisory Board and someone whose political judgment I admire, recommended a manuscript by a young civil rights lawyer. He's someone, Sen. Rock advised, worth keeping an eye on.

That's how I landed the uncorrected proofs of a memoir by one Barack Obama. Uncorrected proofs are just that. They may have typos and some of the content may be subject to last-minute change. And they come in unwieldy form, maybe bound by a rubber band.

I have, on occasion, wheedled out of publishers the proofs of books by well-known writers. But in this case, the publisher likely was peddling proofs of *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*.

I read it on Amtrak, going to or from

Chicago. After all, Obama wasn't a complete stranger to *Illinois Issues*. He had written an essay for the August/September 1988 edition of the magazine about his experiences as a community organizer in Chicago, which the magazine republished as a chapter in a 1990 book, *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*.

That chapter is still available online at <http://civic.uis.edu/Alinsky/AlinskyObamachapter1990.htm>.

Clearly, Obama can write. And the manuscript was interesting. But, I remember thinking, if I write about a memoir by one young up-and-comer, where will it end? And, besides, the book seemed way too intimate for our pages. I stacked it on a shelf and forgot about it.

Barack Obama was elected to the state Senate (we wrote about him often in the magazine), and *Dreams from My Father* went out of print.

End of story? Not quite. In the summer of 2002, I ran across those proofs again, still bound by that flimsy rubber band. Why, I wondered, would I possibly need this? So I tossed them.

I've often thought that if I had saved those proofs, if I had, perhaps, gotten them signed, they might have generated enough cash for the magazine on eBay

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to enable us to bypass a few fundraising letters to our readers.

Instead, I purchased the 2004 edition — including the full text of that now-famous speech at the Democratic National Convention — shortly after it shot to the top of *The New York Times* best-seller list.

The overwhelming response to Obama's memoir was enlightening. What I couldn't see in the mid-1990s is the public's hunger for authenticity, for deeper reflection on the part of public officials at all levels of government. I didn't realize that it's the details of Obama's story, and his intimate way of telling it, that transforms one man's memoir into a prism for our collective psyche, our own continuing struggles with race and identity.

By now, whether we've read the memoir or not, most of us know he's the son of a white woman from Kansas and a black man from Kenya; he was raised in Indonesia and Hawaii; he was a community organizer in Chicago; and he went to Harvard. His assessment of the meaning of that biography comes through in the speech that launched him

onto the national stage. Still, it's never too late to recommend the memoir as a way to start getting at the subtext of this personal narrative.

I recommend reading Obama's second book next. By my lights, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* is the better book. If, in the memoir, we watch Obama reach inward toward an understanding of himself, in the second book we watch him reach outward toward an understanding of his place in the wider context of politics and policy.

In *The Audacity of Hope*, he weighs in on partisanship, grapples with the nation's constitutional foundations, assesses the role of faith in public life and addresses race and family matters. Most reporters will want to read about his decision — despite advice to the contrary — to speak out against the war in Iraq as early as 2002.

It's there (on page 294), but it's shortsighted to quit with a catalog of policy decisions. Taken together, Obama's books offer us a glimpse of how he makes those decisions. And that may, in the end, be more useful. □

Inaugural Day

A prayer for peace

From this vantage, the most challenging words at the inaugural ceremony for statewide officials were delivered in the form of a prayer.

The Rev. Thomas Hudson Cross called for a broader understanding of nationalism and a renewed use of religion. Rev. Cross is a retired pastor at First United Methodist Church of Elmhurst. He also is the father of House Republican Leader Tom Cross of Oswego.

Unlike a lot of what was said by politicians on Inauguration Day, Rev. Cross' prayer should resonate through these next perilous months in Springfield and Washington. In that spirit, we excerpt a bit of it here.

"[I]f our love of country becomes so limiting that it breeds a perception of anyone different as an enemy to be feared and conquered, then we have forfeited our claim to be leaders and have thus become part of the squalor.

"A hymnist wrote 'forbid false love of country that blinds us to your call, who lifts above every nation the unity of all.' We need your guidance to gain a vision of a peace that is greater than our provincial interests, grander than our parochial needs.

"And, O God, you know that as our nationalistic chauvinism could stand some broadening, the way we use our religion could bear some renewal as well. Whether we are Protestants, Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christians, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Bahai, it has been easy to use our religion to label and blame, to denounce and exclude, to judge and condemn, to even justify killing in your holy name. All of these we have done in the interest of certifying our own righteousness and securing our own safety."

Amen.

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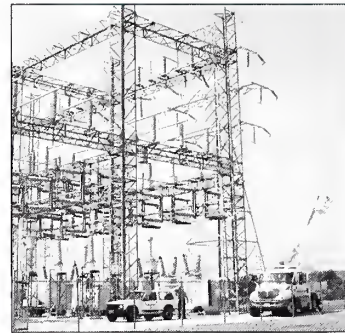
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Credits: The photograph on our cover comes to us courtesy of Sen. Barack Obama's Senate Office.

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Bethany Carson



What is charitable care, and how much should hospitals be required to provide?

by Bethany Carson

Not many businesses would provide a service without expecting payment in return.

Hospitals often do that. If a woman in labor rushes into the emergency room, staff cares for her and the baby regardless of the family's ability to pay.

Most Illinois hospitals are not-for-profit entities with a mission to care for anyone who comes through their doors, whether they have private insurance, get public aid or have no health coverage at all. In turn, nonprofit hospitals get a break on some state and local taxes so they can continue caring for the uninsured and others who sink below the federal poverty level.

In 2005, 14 percent of Illinoisans, or about 1.8 million people, lacked health insurance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Twelve percent, or about 1.4 million Illinoisans, lived below the federal poverty level, which is less than \$20,000 for a family of four. While the federal-state Medicaid program reimburses hospitals for caring for the poor and disabled, the reimbursements fall below the cost of providing the care.

Emergency rooms, burn centers and high-risk neonatal centers all lose money for nonprofit hospitals because of low reimbursement levels, says Bettina French, spokeswoman for the Illinois Hospital Association. Nevertheless, nonprofit hospitals provide the services when for-profit hospitals won't.

The rules for how much charitable care nonprofit hospitals must provide to get a tax break could change in this legislative session.

Other costs hospitals incur aren't subsidized by the government at all. If a patient has private insurance or no insurance and can't afford to pay the medical bills, hospitals eat the costs, French says. That patient can apply for so-called charitable care, which allows the hospital to get a tax break. But the rules for how much charitable care nonprofit hospitals must provide to get a tax break could change in this legislative session.

Last year, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan urged some Democratic state lawmakers to introduce a measure that would clarify what hospitals need to do to keep getting tax breaks.

She plans to renew her push this year. "Right now, hospitals that receive entire loaves of bread for free are handing out crumbs when it comes to providing health care to some of the most vulnerable Illinoisans," Madigan said in a statement last January. "It is clear that we must create standards and hold hospitals accountable to fulfill their

charity care responsibilities."

On one hand, the Illinois Hospital Association says hospitals in this state already provide more than \$1 billion in charitable care. On the other hand, the state wants to ensure that nonprofit hospitals fulfill their obligations under federal law, which requires them to care for anyone whose health would be jeopardized if he or she didn't get screened, treated or transferred elsewhere.

Madigan is expected to revive and possibly recast legislation that initially required nonprofit hospitals to devote a minimum of 8 percent of their operating costs to charitable care.

The attorney general's office spent last summer and fall talking to hospitals and fine-tuning the proposal, which could change the 8 percent requirement for tax-exempt status. Illinois' not-for-profit hospitals hope the revised measure will lower the required percentage and expand the definition of charity care, such as including unmet Medicaid and Medicare costs.

Meanwhile, an ongoing court case has raised a question about whether a central Illinois hospital qualifies for a property tax exemption. Hospitals around the state fear the decision may mean the services they provide for free or for reduced prices may not meet the state's current standard.

Last fall, the Illinois Department of Revenue denied a local property tax

exemption for Provena Covenant Medical Center in Urbana. The decision confirmed the Champaign County Board's vote to reject the hospital's tax-exempt status for 2002.

Department records show Provena brought in more than \$113 million that year, and spent more than \$831,000 on charitable care. That's less than 1 percent of its 2002 revenue.

"This small amount of charitable care is so seriously insufficient that it simply cannot withstand the constitutional scrutiny required to justify a property tax exemption," wrote Brian Hamer, Department of Revenue director.

The property is owned by Provena Health, a Catholic health system that includes six hospitals and many other long-term care facilities, clinics and other services in Illinois and Indiana. Provena Covenant also has contracts with private companies to run its emergency room, labs and other hospital services.

It differs from for-profit hospitals in that "they're owned by the stockholders. We're owned by our governing board of sisters," says Gregory Alford, Provena spokesman. "Any excess revenues go right back into the facilities, and that's why paying property taxes hurts the community — because it's taking away more than \$1 million a year that could be used to buy new equipment, to expand access to care, to do a lot of different things."

Provena appealed in Sangamon County circuit court and wrote in a statement last fall that the department's ruling "undermines our charitable mission and threatens every hospital in the state." The hospital reported it has paid \$4.8 million in property taxes since 2003 and committed more than \$11.3 million in "charitable benefits to the community" in 2005. But its definition of community benefits includes more services than the definition of charity care in the department's ruling.

"It's not as though this is a real high-margin business here," Alford says. "It doesn't take a lot to really disrupt the bottom line in health care, and hospitals particularly. So taking \$1 million for taxes every year does make a significant difference."

The Hospital Association called the ruling "outrageous" and warned that it could open the door for the state to

***[R]equiring a percentage
of operating costs
for charitable care means
that if a hospital's costs go
up, so does the amount it
must designate to that care.***

impose new tax burdens on all not-for-profit hospitals, forcing them to reduce services and eventually leading to increased costs to patients and employers.

The attorney general's office is representing the revenue department in Provena's appeal but remains engaged in trying to reform the hospital charity-care issue, says spokeswoman Cara Smith.

If the state were to enact the original 8 percent requirement, the Hospital Association warns the added cost statewide could total \$739 million in uncompensated care.

The association and some Republican lawmakers hope to see revisions in the attorney general's proposal. They argue that the 8 percent figure chosen by the attorney general's office is arbitrary. They also believe the definition of charitable care is too narrow. And they warn the proposed rules would unevenly affect hospitals in rural and urban areas.

Smith says Illinois case law establishes 3 percent as the absolute minimum amount hospitals need to spend on charitable care. She adds that the office met with numerous hospitals in more than 50 meetings since last year, and the office consulted with hospital financial experts who recommended using a percentage of operating costs as an equitable measuring stick. It would establish one standard for charitable care provided by hospitals in rural, urban or suburban areas, she says.

Regardless of the number, the Hospital Association is concerned that requiring a percentage of operating costs for charitable care means that if a hospital's costs go up, so does the amount it must dedicate to that care, says French.

"That means every time that a hospital buys a new piece of equipment or hires more nurses, then costs go up," she says. "It's a percent of a higher figure. If the

hospital wants to improve its equipment or its staff, suddenly they're punished. It's a perverse incentive."

Another challenge is defining charity care, which could have implications for hospitals throughout the state, says state Sen. Dale Righter, a Mattoon Republican.

His hometown includes Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center and its associated clinics throughout his district. Minority spokesman on the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, Righter calls the initial charity-care legislation "overly restrictive," in that it would set a one-size-fits-all definition for what would be appropriate levels of charitable care.

"I feel so strongly about this," he says. "This is exactly the wrong direction to go to help deal with the issue of the uninsured. We should look for ways to lift up providers who are providing free and reduced health care, not tie them down to some rigid standard."

Instead of relying solely on a percentage of hospitals' operating costs, he suggests, the state also should consider the median income and the number of health centers in each area.

Smith says while Illinois case law defines charitable care as "expenditures that directly benefit the medically needy," the attorney general is sensitive to the hospitals' concerns.

In mid-January, French said the Hospital Association still didn't know how or when the attorney general would propose a new standard. But she hopes whatever is decided, it requires less than 8 percent of operating costs.

Although the original measure barely squeaked out of a House committee without Republican support, a compromise is possible.

"Nobody's evil in this situation," French says. "It really boils down to the problem of the uninsured. It's a huge problem, and it doesn't make sense to make the hospitals bear the burden. It's a social problem that somebody's got to solve some time. But hospitals can't do it alone."

"The attorney general is smart and is a good person," she adds. "There's bound to be some sort of an acceptable compromise that won't hurt this health care system." □

Bethany Carson can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.

BRIEFLY

CALL TO ACTION Statewide officials set out their agendas

The new kid on the block is a 30-year-old Chicago banker and the first Democratic state

treasurer in 12 years. After taking his oath of office, **Alexander "Alexi" Giannoulis** said he intends to be a consumer advocate while serving as the state's fiscal watchdog.

On his first official day, Giannoulis issued an executive order banning so-called pay-to-play politics by prohibiting contributors and family members from receiving state contracts with his office.

The six-part package is modeled after ethics rules issued by Comptroller Daniel Hynes and Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn. Legislation also is pending to put the rules into state statute.

Giannoulis says his experience as vice president and senior loan officer for his family's Broadway Bank in Chicago gives him insight into bringing new income to the state and enhancing Illinois' investment portfolio.

His family connections provided other benefits to his campaign.

State Board of Elections records show that his mother, Anna Giannoulis, loaned him nearly \$1.5 million before October 20, 2006. Other family members gave between \$1,000 and \$50,000 at a time. His fundraising topped \$2.8 million, according to the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform.

"We had over 2,000 contributors to our campaign," the new treasurer says. "There's a tremendous benefit to being an independent candidate, and that's what I was. I wasn't a machine candidate. I worked very hard. And because of that,

now that I'm in office, I'm not beholden to anybody."

But allegations that his family's bank did business with mob-connected customers raised questions from House Speaker Michael Madigan, chairman of the state Democratic Party. Last



*Alexander "Alexi"
Giannoulis*

year, the speaker supported Giannoulis' opponent in the primary. Still, Giannoulis won the Democratic nomination by more than 204,000 votes.

He did receive the endorsement of U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, who urged Giannoulis to provide answers about questionable loans to organized crime members.

Cynthia Canary, director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, says the treasurer's role as the investor of the state's money demands transparency. That would include making sure a solid portion is invested in minority-owned firms in the state. She says the public needs to be able to say, "There is a process for choosing the firms that we work with, where we put our money, and that process is not linked to political favoritism and campaign contributions."

Canary also serves on Giannoulis' transition team, which the organization will do for any candidate "so long as they realize that that doesn't provide them a lifelong get-out-of-jail-free pass," she says.

Transparency is a priority, Giannoulis says, because voters care about ethics now more than ever. "I'm not a career politician. I'm a financial manager, and that's what the state treasurer should be, someone who knows how to manage people's money, but someone who also has innovative ideas that can help on the policy side."

He vows not to accept political contributions from his employees or any

bank, regardless of whether the bank does business with the treasurer's office. He also will deny donations from contractors who do business with his office. And when companies bid for state contracts worth more than \$10,000, they will have to disclose donations to his campaign.

His employees also are banned from lobbying for two years after they leave his office. And he won't accept any lobbying gifts, including meals and drinks.

"These measures are a good first step. And I guarantee more will follow," he said while standing with Lt. Gov. Quinn — a former state treasurer — at a State-house news conference. "Illinois needs to end the connection between political contributions and lucrative state contracts that have given us a black eye. The people of Illinois have had enough."

Giannoulis earned a law degree from Tulane University in New Orleans after playing NCAA basketball at Boston University and professional basketball in Greece. He also founded and chairs the AG Foundation, a nonprofit charity that donates money to treat child-related illnesses, curb poverty and assist disaster relief organizations, according to his Web site.

The governor and other constitutional officers, all Chicago Democrats, set out their policy agendas on Inauguration Day last month. Here's a list of issues and pieces of legislation to watch for this session.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich promises to



expand programs for health care, education, job creation and public safety — without raising taxes. He says his priority is to build on the universal health insurance

program for children, called All Kids, by extending state-sponsored health insurance to adults.

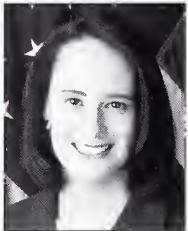
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Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn says he'll continue



to promote statewide ethics reform and support for military families. He also wants to continue a grass-roots effort to provide decent health care for everyone.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan



plans to work with lawmakers and law enforcement officials to combat mortgage fraud that enables "thieves to steal

people's houses out from under them, and with that, their life savings." She says she also wants to find ways to protect the most vulnerable members of society from nursing home abuse, as well as victims of Internet predators.

She is expected to renew her push for a measure requiring nonprofit hospitals to designate portions of their operating costs to caring for the uninsured.

Secretary of State Jesse White vows



to work with legislators and a teen driver safety task force on measures to make roads safer for teenage drivers. Those proposals will include lengthening the time

young drivers must have learner's permits and shortening the time they can be on the road each day.

Comptroller Daniel Hynes' three



agenda items include balancing the budget — which he calculates faces a \$1.5 billion backlog of unpaid bills — enforcing ethics and funding stem cell research. He says it's

time to cap overspending by the state, close gaps in what Medicare will pay for and end the shell game of deferring liabilities to the future. But he says one initiative the state can afford is earmarking \$100,000 over five years for stem cell research, which he says could be paid for with money owed to states by tobacco companies.

Bethany Carson and Deanese Williams-Harris

LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

The 95th General Assembly launched its spring session in January. A few policy items already top the to-do list.

✓ **Ethics investigations**

If a state ethics investigator is looking into whether a state employee or contractor violated Illinois' ethics law, those reports would be made public by a measure introduced in the House. The proposal is part of an ethics reform package sponsored by Rep. John Fritchey, a Chicago Democrat.

✓ **Smoking bans**

State Sen. John Cullerton, a Chicago Democrat, wants Illinois to become a smoke-free state that protects the public from second-hand smoke. Under his proposal, a statewide ban would override the city and county bans already in place.

✓ **Teen driving**

Recommendations issued by the Teen Driver Safety Task Force are expected to be folded into legislation, including a provision restricting the number of passengers.

Bethany Carson and Deanese Williams-Harris

NEW AMERICANS

State panels suggest immigrant policies

Two panels created by the governor recommend helping immigrants transition into Illinois communities, but the state has not designated dollars to pay for the proposals.

The New Americans Immigrant Policy Council and the State Interagency Task Force, both appointed by Gov. Rod Blagojevich, were charged with suggesting improvements to state immigrant policy. Each came up with recommendations. They include offering English classes to immigrants, easing their efforts to access social services and simplifying the transfer of degrees and certifications from other countries.

Immigrants and their children now represent more than a quarter of Illinois' population, and the number of immigrants who are living in the state is growing by 35,300 annually, according to a report by Joshua Hoyt, executive director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigration and Refugee Rights, and Rob Paral, a research fellow with the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

The governor's council calls for state funding of dual-language pilot programs so that children can continue speaking their native languages while learning English. The program also would give English-speaking children a chance to learn other languages.

To help families access social services, the task force recommends creating "welcoming centers" in communities with high immigrant populations and providing interpreters at agencies.

Language barriers are one of the biggest challenges for immigrants, says Gerardo Cardenas, the spokesman for the governor. "Teaching English will be the most important thing we can do to help immigrants."

So far, no state money has been dedicated to carrying out the recommendations.

Tom Green, spokesman for the Department of Human Services, says, "We don't need legislation, and we don't have dollar amounts attached to [the suggestions], except the welcoming center. That will be determined as programs are planned."

Whatever the cost, Green says it's worth it. "The investment we put into teaching English, promoting citizenship, developing job skills and educating children and families will pay huge dividends for all Illinoisans," he says.

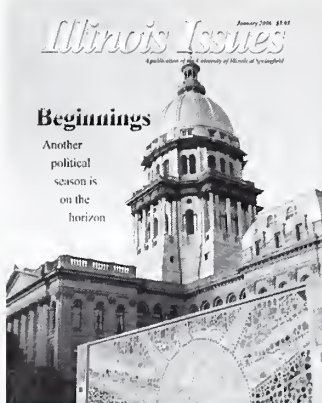
Cardenas says the governor plans to meet with immigration leaders, the members of the two panels and lawmakers to talk about the next step.

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Highway considered for Illinois and Indiana

Illinois and Indiana are studying whether a new expressway is needed between northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana, a region that suffers from severe traffic congestion resulting from freight and truck routes around Chicago.

Courtesy of the Indiana Department of Transportation

Dubbed the Illiana Expressway, 63 miles of road would connect Interstate 57 in Will County to Interstate 94 along Lake Michigan in Indiana. The Hoosiers' portion would be a toll road, though Illinois' would not, according to Matt Vanover, spokesman for the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The transportation departments in each state are in the preliminary stages of exploring whether a new highway is needed and whether an expressway or a two-lane highway would be feasible, Vanover says.

"You really need to determine those types of things before you could really begin to talk about financing," he says.

The Indiana department suggests a publicly owned, privately funded highway. The state would own the stretch of road, but a private company would finance, design, build, maintain and operate it for the life of a lease, says Jamie Jorzak, director of communications and marketing for Indiana's public-private partnerships, P3 for short.

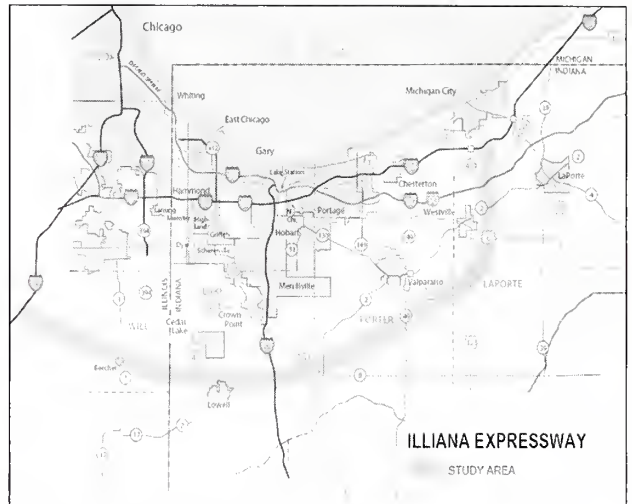
Illinois leased the Chicago Skyway to a private company for \$1.8 billion in 2004, and Indiana leased its Indiana Toll Road for \$3.8 billion last year. But Jorzak says that was an existing road that wasn't making money, whereas this would be an entirely new road built to ease traffic congestion.

"We're solving a different type of problem, but we have the problem that most states have, that our highway funding is thinning out, and we need a new creative way to approach highway funding," she says. "That's where P3 funding comes in."

The feasibility study is expected to take up to three years and cost between \$5 million and \$10 million. That cost would be shared by the states. A significant portion of the study would look at the freight and truck traffic around Chicago, as well as the 300,000 vehicles that travel between Chicago and Indiana each day.

Any proposed highway would need state and federal approval before construction could begin.

Bethany Carson



Investigations of abuse faster, but not fast enough

The pace of investigations into alleged abuse or neglect at 17 state-funded buildings for people with disabilities or mental illness has picked up in the past two years, but they still average more than 60 days, according to the Illinois auditor general.

The December audit looked into the Illinois Department of Human Services' office of inspector general. The agency has one inspector general with a staff of about 30 investigators throughout the state. The number of investigators has decreased because of a state hiring freeze, as well as through resignations or retirement, says Tom Green, department spokesman.

The audit says there is potential for more timeliness problems because the caseload has increased over the past two fiscal years. Green says that's partially because agencies have gotten better at self-reporting possible abuse or neglect, which can range from rape to inadequate medical care.

The inspector general's office agreed with nearly all recommendations to improve reporting and investigating of abuse and neglect claims.

Bethany Carson

BOOK SHELF

Authors touch on Abe Lincoln

The most personal view of Abraham Lincoln in three new paperbacks that connect him to history can be seen in the family's photograph collection. Historians Mark Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer have published an updated edition of their 1990 book, *The Lincoln Family Album*, including additional photographs (Southern Illinois University Press, 2006).

As the authors write in the preface to this edition, the Lincolns were the first First Family to put their private photographs together in an album because their arrival at the White House coincided with the widespread availability of paper photographs and leather albums to display them. Yet the 16th president's family album became known to historians only in 1985 when Lincoln's last descendant, his great-grandson Robert Beckwith, died in Virginia. The album is now held at The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Ind.

The enduring influence of Lincoln on the generation that followed him can be glimpsed in Louise Knight's paperback biography of Jane Addams, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, 2006). The biographer recounts the family's connection to Lincoln: Addams' father was a friend and admirer, and Jane would look to Lincoln's words and deeds to draw strength for her own battles.

John Addams was an Illinois state senator who supported Lincoln for the U.S. Senate in 1855. Addams, who helped organize the Republican Party, agreed with Lincoln's opposition to slavery.

Citizen covers the first four decades of Jane Addams' life and

follows the intellectual journey that formed the basis of her belief system. Knight reveals her early development as a social reformer and political activist, including the first decade of running Hull House, Chicago's first settlement house where she taught citizenship. She built her world on a belief in democracy she shared with her father and his friend Lincoln that all people, whatever their background, class or social identity, could share the title of citizen.

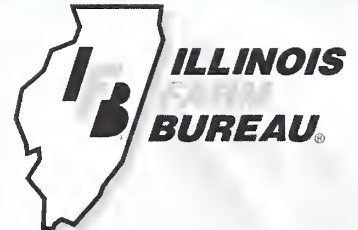
A third book takes a close look at the material culture of early Illinois citizens, particularly those in central Illinois who rubbed shoulders with Lincoln when he was becoming a political leader. In *The Sangamo Frontier: History & Archaeology in the Shadow of Lincoln* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), Robert Mazrim describes the landscape Lincoln would have seen when he settled in the Sangamon River valley in 1831. Artifacts found in places long abandoned — homes, stores, taverns and a pottery shop — tell stories of the places Lincoln visited and of his neighbors.

Detailing excavations in Elkhart, New Salem, Sangamo Town and Springfield, Mazrim ties the discarded pieces of everyday life — broken dishes, tobacco pipes, spoons, fish hooks and medicine bottles — to people with names and family histories, many of them connected to Lincoln.

In the short time the settlement of Sangamo Town existed (it was gone by 1850), Lincoln became part of local lore. Located eight miles upriver from Springfield, it was the place where the local storekeeper's son helped Lincoln build the flatboat that carried him and a shipment of hogs to New Orleans, one of the enlightening chapters in the future president's life.

Beverly Scobell

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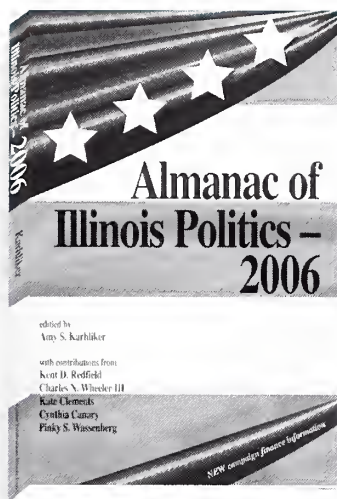


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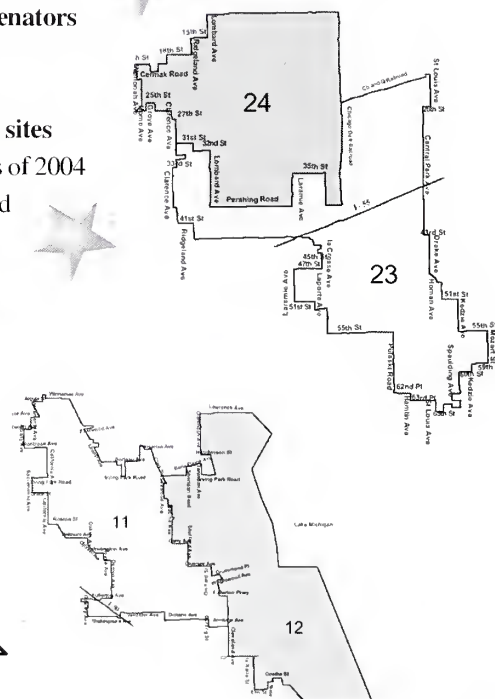
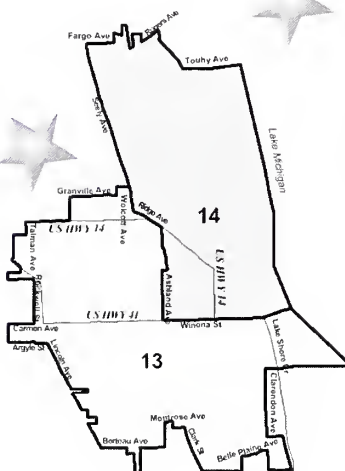
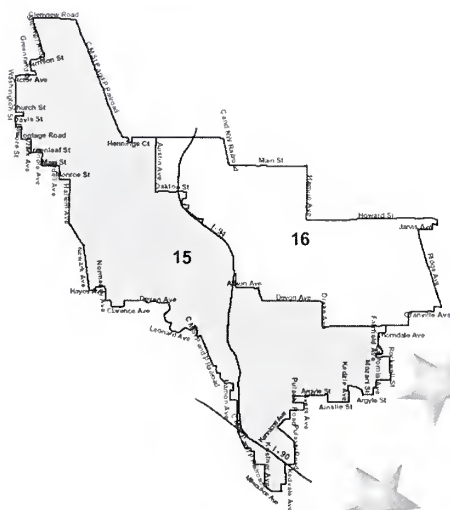
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James Jones' daughter donates dad's letters

Letters the famed World War II-era novelist and Illinois native James Jones wrote to his brother are among documents recently given to the University of Illinois at Springfield's Archives.

The gift, donated by Jones' daughter Kaylie, includes a collection of newspaper clippings about Jones and a charcoal drawing of the writer, as well as 11 letters. Eight of them were written by Jones to his brother, and three sent to Jones came from editors and an uncle.

The letters to Jones' brother are especially significant, says UIS Archivist Thomas Wood. They date from between 1947 and 1952, the period in which Jones' well-known book, *From Here to Eternity*, was written and published. In them, Jones describes his work on the novel, offers his brother writing advice and disses their family in detail.

"They're very interesting letters, kind of intense," says Wood, who also is a board member and the archivist of the James Jones Literary Society. "Jones was not someone to be euphemistic. They're quite frank, very personal and very revealing."

Jones was born and grew up in Robinson. While in the U.S. Army, he was at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked and was later wounded at Guadalcanal. He wrote nine novels, as well as short stories, nonfiction and essays on his wartime experiences. Jones' novel *From Here to Eternity*, which tells the tale of a former boxer on an Army base in the Pacific, won the National Book Award and is considered one of the most important fictional works about the WWII era.

Jones' daughter, who also is a published author and chairwoman of the James Jones First Novel Fellowship, says she received the new documents while visiting a cousin she had never met, the son of Jones' brother. In October, she gave them to Wood in person at the annual James Jones Literary Society Symposium in Champaign. The new documents will be incorporated into the UIS Archives' existing Jones collection.

"Tom Wood has been an enormous supporter of the James Jones society from the very beginning, donating his time and energy and doing a great deal of pro bono [work] for the society," she says. "So really it was because of him. I wanted to give back."

The existing collection in the archives contains hundreds of letters and manuscripts associated with the Handy Writers' Colony, which Jones co-founded in Marshall in 1949 with Harry and Lowney Handy. The collection was acquired in 1983 when Jeffrey Van Davis and J. Michael Lennon produced a documentary aired nationally, *James Jones: Reveille to Taps*, at then-Sangamon State University.

As part of the collection, the new documents will be open for research.

WE SEEM TO TEAR EACH OTHER DOWN.
HE PLAYING "GREAT ARTIST," YOU PLAYING "SUPERIOR FATHER."
BOTH ACTS—BOTH DEMANDING MORAL SUPERIORITY.
SOMETHING, I DON'T KNOW.
VERY BUT, LOWKEY

OVER

Saturday the 21st

AFTER
MIDNIGHT

Dear Jeff,

Here's the carbon back. I and both like it, a lot better than either of us had expected we would. Its got all the makings, all you need to do is finish it. All you need to do is keep writing.

Actually, in the end, I guess thats all there ever really is to it. Anybody can write, and write great stuff, if they only want to do it bad enough.

You write much better than you use to, with a more lucid clarity of action and the constant moving of people. My only criticism would be that you go on to long, now and then, tottry and get a strong emotion over--instead of just suggesting it. Over-writing, like with the old man and the storm, or like when he almost hits the cow. The physical description is fine, but the part in Joe's mind overdoes. But then, I told you that before, up there.

I'm enclosing a picture of Rabinowitz's pastel, that yo might like it. We are leaving for Florida tomorrow. I havent worked at all on the book since I got home, I've been badly off; so I finally just started working on some stories, fiddling with them like I was fiddling with the book, not getting anything, until just lately one, only one, started going suddenly and I've got it about finished. Will send it to Esquire because it turned out their kind. Had hoped to have it done before we left, but havent. So it must wait till we get ettled in. Russ Meskinmen, Willard Lindsay, Tinks Howe, are going along and we'll get a regular house. Hope to have the book done by Xmas so it can come out in the spring, but aint sure. Something, some catalyst that busts, when you and I get together always throws me off my writing, so that it becomes ~~honest~~ both forced and trite, without power, and sounding contrived. I dont know why, except I know it must be at least 50% my fault. At always happens. Next time, I'll wait until whatever I'm working on is finished, before I come up.

Love to the en famille, *Jim*



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Obama

He puts ethics on the agenda

by Daniel C. Vock

Photograph courtesy of Sen. Barack Obama's Senate Office

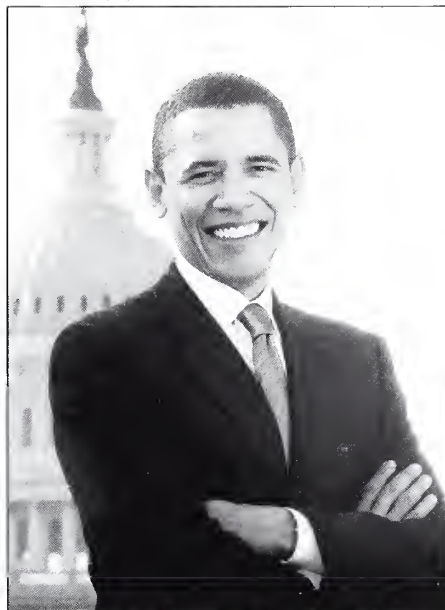
Barack Obama says the “extremely good fortune” that launched him, seemingly without effort, into the top tier of American politics has helped him steer clear of entanglements with special interests and donors.

“I’m not sure that’s a typical experience. But it allows me even more independence now that I’m a sought-after politician because I get to talk to the voters directly,” Obama said in an interview shortly after the November election.

The Chicago Democrat, who is beginning his third year in the U.S. Senate, enjoys a squeaky clean image, in part because he has long championed cleaning up government. And that reputation is one reason voters find him so attractive, says Cynthia Canary, executive director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. To the public, she says, Obama appears to be someone who, at a fundamental level, “believes in good government [and] believes in the potential of government to change things, to improve people’s lives and to be honest.”

But now, more than ever, the public will want to know whether the senator can live up to that image — or even his own words. This will be the crucial question in the next weeks as Obama tests the presidential waters, leads his caucus’ ethics reform efforts and faces increased scrutiny of his political record and personal actions.

In early January, after Democrats assumed control of both chambers of Congress, Obama got his first chance to significantly reshape federal ethics policy. As Senate Democratic leaders continued



U.S. Sen. Barack Obama in front of the U.S. Capitol

work on a high-priority ethics plan, Obama and Sen. Russ Feingold, a Wisconsin Democrat, unveiled a reform wish list of their own.

For his part, Obama hopes several of the measures he championed unsuccessfully last year will finally make it into law. “There is undoubtedly some low-hanging fruit that can be dealt with promptly,” he says.

Many of the reforms Obama cites as easy targets would deal with abuses that came to light in the scandals surrounding former lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who pleaded guilty a year ago to tax evasion, fraud and bribery charges. Obama hopes lawmakers will strengthen gift and meal bans, implement new travel restrictions,

divulge more details about pet projects buried in appropriations bills and prohibit members of Congress and their staffs from lobbying on Capitol Hill for two years after leaving it.

The Abramoff scandals shook Capitol Hill and became an issue in several races. In short, Abramoff wined and dined members of Congress free of charge at his Pennsylvania Avenue restaurant and paid for a trip to Scotland by then-House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, a Texas Republican, who insists he was told a nonprofit group paid for the excursion. And then-Sen. Conrad Burns, a Montana Republican, came under fire for inserting an appropriations “earmark” of \$3 million for the Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan at Abramoff’s behest.

“I don’t think you can entirely eliminate some of these problems, but you can minimize them. You can’t make it perfect, but you can make it better,” Obama says.

Beyond placing tighter restrictions on outright gifts and privately subsidized meals and travel, Obama wants to create an independent commission to investigate ethical lapses by members of Congress. That’s a tougher sell because it could dilute congressional authority and because it scares members who remember the lengthy investigation by White House special prosecutor Kenneth Starr in the 1990s. However, Obama’s proposal calls for the new outside commission to investigate complaints. The panel’s conclusions would then be turned over to the Justice Department or to the House or Senate ethics committees, the bodies currently charged with



Obama greets supporters at the Broadway Armory in Chicago.

researching complaints and handing down sanctions.

Obama also wants to make the legislative process more open by allowing the public to watch conference committee meetings, requiring bills to be posted online for 24 hours before a vote and making members of Congress immediately disclose future employment negotiations they have with outside groups.

More fundamentally, Obama says he wants to reduce the role of money in political campaigns. But he says attempts to reform campaign finance law are complicated because each political party wants to gain tactical advantages in such changes. In the last round of reform, for instance, Democrats were the chief defenders of "soft money" used to pay for party-run TV ads, while GOP

One for the history books

Not since 1858 has one Senate election had such an impact on the national leadership cadre

by John Jackson

Barack Obama's election to the U.S. Senate from Illinois may prove to be one of the most significant in American history. Perhaps not since the Senate election of 1858, when Stephen Douglas defeated Abraham Lincoln, has one Senate election had such an impact on the national leadership cadre. Although Lincoln lost that election, his speeches and debates with Douglas over slavery and the future of the Union ensured his place as a national leader of the young Republican Party and then as a leading contender for the Republican nomination in 1860.

Obama, too, has potential to make a long-term contribution to his party. Though one of 100 senators, and a freshman at that, he has become a successful fundraiser for the Democrats, and his influence has spread far beyond the usual parameters for a first-term senator. He's the first African-American male senator to be elected since Edward Brooke of Massachusetts. He's the second African American elected to the Senate from Illinois following former Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, who was elected in 1992 and then defeated in 1998. With the exception of the post-Civil War Reconstruction era, Brooke, Braun and now Obama are the only three popularly elected African-American senators in American history.

Obama's rise to the national stage has been so meteoric he's exploring a presidential bid and is now a genuine first-tier challenger for the Democratic nomination.

His run up to that decision over the past two years was fueled by the re-release of his biography, which became a best

seller. Then he wrote and released a second book titled *The Audacity of Hope*, a phrase he used in the keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention that introduced him to a national and international audience.

Over the summer, he took his family to Africa, visiting his father's homeland and his grandmother in Kenya, an event that received more media attention than most overseas trips taken by senators. The rest of the summer and fall, he took turns promoting his new book and stumping for Democratic candidates.

Talk of a presidential run grew with each stop, but particularly when he made key trips to Iowa and New Hampshire. Overflow crowds attended Sen. Tom Harkin's summer steak fry in the countryside near Des Moines and again in New Hampshire at a celebration following Democratic victories in the November general election.

Stepping back from the hype and hoopla, we can see two lessons in the 2004 Illinois primary, well before Obama became famous.

First, Obama is remarkably appealing to the core constituents of the Democratic Party, and he unites the party in ways that few candidates can. He ran extremely well among African Americans and other minorities, white urban dwellers, liberals and the young. He also did well among independents and suburbanites, which accounts for the margin of his victory and proved that he can broaden the Democratic base.

Second, Obama encountered clear and persistent opposition from the Republican Party's core constituencies. That is, there

interests focused on allowing “issue ads” that are designed to attack candidates and are funded by anonymous contributors.

In some respects, campaign finance reform is familiar terrain for Obama. After coming to Springfield a decade ago, one of his first tasks was representing state Senate Democrats in bipartisan talks that led to the Gift Ban Act, the first major overhaul of Illinois campaign and ethics laws in 25 years.

But now Obama is a top draw at Democratic fundraisers, so much so that New Hampshire’s governor joked Obama could sell more tickets than the Rolling Stones. And new campaign finance rules could affect Obama’s own political fortunes in a White House run in 2008 or later.

Obama’s transformation from rank-and-



Obama talks with Illinois soldiers at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti.

is evidence of a lack of support in the small towns, the rural areas and among those voters who are compelled by religious morality. His Republican opponent, Alan Keyes, who ran about as hapless a campaign as Illinois has witnessed in its recent history, took 10 counties in small-town and rural Illinois. Surely Obama and his advisers understand that he must reach out to some part of that constituency in order to win the presidency in a nation where religion is such an important value for so many voters.

The senator’s recent visit to a conference of evangelicals at Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., is an excellent example of the kind of outreach Obama recommends in his recent book. Warren is one of the best-known pastors and religious authors in the nation, and Saddleback is the kind of mega-church that now dominates much of Protestantism in the United States. If Obama can find a sympathetic audience at the Saddleback Church, he can probably speak in an idiom that would be appealing to many other deeply religious Americans of both the evangelical and mainstream camps. It should be noted, though, that Obama’s visit to Saddleback generated some controversy in the larger evangelical community.

As has Warren himself. While he’s generally conservative, Warren also has raised very public doubts about some of the religious right’s agenda. He is an advocate for the social gospel in areas that are very compatible with Obama’s policy positions.

Perhaps all this emphasis on political ecumenicalism grew, in part, out of Obama’s experience of running against Keyes and feeling acutely uncomfortable with his own inability to answer some of Keyes’ religiously couched charges against him. Indeed, his recent book recommends such a religious and values-based dialogue to his Democratic peers. Such values

have a broad appeal, especially to voters in the more rural and sparsely populated states where the Democrats have had a hard time winning recently. But those values also appeal to the congregations of mega-churches in the cities and suburbs.

Numerically, there are far more of the rural and small-town counties in the United States than there are urban counties. Nevertheless, the balance of power is now in the suburban and, increasingly, the “exurban” counties, and it is there that national elections will be won in the future.

Recent polls indicate that Obama can appeal across these geographical, partisan and ideological boundaries and become a truly national candidate. Obama is now running second in all the horserace polls for the 2008 Democratic nomination for president. He and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York are clearly the leaders for the Democrats, and both would be competitive in the general election.

To gain such political success and national prominence in just two years is unprecedented in presidential politics — at least since the unlikely rise of that other Illinoisan, Abraham Lincoln. The key to current events, however, lies in the race for the Senate in 2004, the way it played out and the lessons the senator took from it. So, if the voters of the entire United States one day get to consider an Obama candidacy, they will have the voters of Illinois to thank for providing them with that choice. □

John Jackson is a visiting professor in the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. This is an edited excerpt from an Occasional Paper he wrote for the institute titled The Making of a Senator: Barack Obama and the 2004 Illinois Senate Race, which can be found at www.siu.edu/~ppi/publications.papers.htm.



Obama and former Gov. Jim Edgar speak before Obama addressed students at the Governor's University of Illinois Law School Lecture Series in Champaign-Urbana.



Obama greets supporters outside of Graham's Fine Chocolates and Ice Cream in downtown Wheaton.

file state lawmaker to the national pundits' top-tier presidential candidate is due largely to his keynote speech to the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. In that speech, he pointed to his biography as the son of a white Kansas woman and a black Kenyan man in his call for American unity. "There is not a liberal America and a conservative America — there is the United States of America," he said.

Though the theme of political unity launched Obama onto the national stage, his ideas on government ethics could propel a national campaign.

Obama need only look across the aisle for an example of a top presidential contender who has pushed for more stringent campaign finance laws. Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican, used his credentials as one of Congress' chief advocates for cleaner elections to bolster his 2000 presidential bid. A major overhaul of campaign finance laws was finally approved in 2002, and McCain is poised as a top GOP presidential contender in 2008, should he decide to run.

Of course, there are inherent hazards to this approach.

"Any time a politician at the federal level is willing to take a leadership role [on ethics], they undoubtedly open themselves up to charges of hypocrisy," says Meredith McGehee, policy director of the Campaign Legal Center, a Washington, D.C.-based group that promotes stringent

campaign finance and ethics laws.

In fact, she notes, McCain survived a brush with a savings-and-loan scandal in the late 1980s. But the scare convinced McCain of the need for ethics reforms, a cause that's raised his profile across the country.

Like McCain, Obama has made ethics reform a central part of his political career. Two years into his first term in the U.S. Senate, he has had limited opportunities to leave a mark at the federal level, especially as a member of the minority party. But he has worked with Republicans on new good-government laws. He co-sponsored one, signed in September, that will create a federal spending database so Web users can track all grants, loans and awards greater than \$25,000. He also pushed to limit the Federal Emergency Management Agency's authority to award open-ended, no-bid contracts in the wake of major disasters — a reaction to post-Katrina abuses.

More to the point, last year Senate Democrats tapped Obama as the chief negotiator for their caucus in talks over post-Abramoff ethics reforms, though those negotiations faltered.

Ethics reform was one of Obama's signature issues in Springfield, as well. Beyond the Gift Ban Act, he helped push Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich's 2003 ethics reforms. The gift ban law, the first broad ethics reform in Illinois since the Watergate era, prohibited

politicians from using campaign funds for personal use, barred fundraising on state property, established ethics commissions, curtailed fundraisers in Springfield during legislative sessions and mandated online reporting of campaign finances. The 2003 ethics package created independent inspectors general with subpoena powers to look into abuses by legislators, statewide officeholders and their employees. It further clamped down on the types of gifts lawmakers can receive and prohibited lobbyists and their spouses from sitting on state boards and commissions.

Obama also touted publicly financed judicial campaigns, an idea that was approved by the Illinois Senate but languished in the House.

While Obama aims for cleaner campaigns and government, he's experienced in the rough-and-tumble of politics. He first decided to run for the Illinois Senate in 1996, initially securing the blessing of his predecessor. But after she lost a special election for an open congressional seat, Alice Palmer decided she wanted to hold onto her state Senate seat. Obama refused to leave the race, and one of his supporters challenged Palmer's nominating petitions. Palmer was forced to withdraw.

Obama held onto his state Senate seat easily every time he came up for re-election, but he suffered a resounding defeat when he challenged U.S. Rep.

Bobby Rush in the 2000 Democratic primary. Rush beat Obama by a 2-1 margin.

Given that resounding loss, it seemed unlikely Obama would walk away from a seven-way primary for the U.S. Senate in 2004 with 53 percent of the vote. But Obama took both the primary and the general election afterward, as opponent after opponent fell apart. His two main primary rivals targeted each other. Then the candidacy of one of those rivals collapsed a month before the primary when unsealed divorce files revealed allegations of violence toward his wife. His would-be general election opponent also was undone by unsealed divorce records that included tales of sex clubs. Illinois Republicans drafted Marylander Alan Keyes, a fiery black conservative best known for losing presidential bids. Obama won easily.

In the course of that campaign, he developed a national following. The self-described “skinny kid with a funny name” became a media darling, a powerful fundraiser and a headliner at campaign rallies — all before serving a day in the U.S. Senate. But as his star rises in Congress, people outside the Beltway worry that Washington politics can change for the worse popular elected officials like Obama.

Certainly Obama is aware of the danger. He devotes a good portion of his new book, *The Audacity of Hope*, to considering the ways in which politicians risk becoming isolated from the rest of America. That risk, he says, is one reason he gave up flying on corporate jets and chose to travel on commercial airlines.

And Obama recalls advice given to him when he was applying to law school. He told his mentor he wanted to practice civil rights law and maybe run for office. “As a rule, both law and politics required compromise, he said; not just on issues but on more fundamental things — your values and ideals,” Obama writes. “He wasn’t



Obama speaks to supporters during a stop in East Moline during a two-day jobs tour that took him to six Illinois cities.

saying that to dissuade me, he said. It was just a fact. It was because of his unwillingness to compromise that, although he had been approached many times in his youth to enter politics, he had always declined.”

Reminded of that conversation in November, Obama said he hasn’t had to bend his principles in order to achieve success. But it’s clear he has long thought about the seduction of power.

After studying at Columbia University in New York, Obama spent three years as a community organizer on the South Side of Chicago, where he helped residents of the Altgeld Gardens housing project insist on better maintenance, more job training opportunities and better schools.

After three years as a grass-roots activist, though, Obama decided to move on. He still felt apprehensive about

leaving Chicago and the residents he’d been fighting for and with. He recounts the decision in *Dreams from My Father*, the memoir he wrote after graduating from Harvard Law School.

“I had things to learn in law school, things that would help me bring about real change. I would learn about interest rates, corporate mergers, the legislative process; about the way businesses and banks were put together; how real estate ventures succeeded or failed,” he wrote.

“I would learn power’s currency in all its intricacy and detail, knowledge that would have compromised me before coming to Chicago but that I could now bring back to where it was needed, back to Roseland, back to Altgeld; bring it back like Promethean fire.”

These days, Obama acknowledges that others often accuse him of straying from his principles, particularly when it comes to his position on the war in Iraq. Even before it started, Obama called the invasion “a dumb war. A rash war. A war based not on reason but on passion, not on principle but on politics.” As a U.S. senator,

though, Obama rejected calls for an immediate withdrawal of troops, favoring instead a plan to pull out over the course of six months. That brought howls from anti-war activists who want U.S. troops to leave right away.

Obama says he hasn’t given any moral ground on the issue.

“Ultimately, it’s just a matter of judgment.” He says he doesn’t favor an immediate withdrawal because he’s evaluating the current situation in Iraq, not past decisions.

On tough issues, Obama says he tries to listen to as many people as he can and consider their arguments. But sometimes, there’s no way to find a solution everyone will agree with. So no matter what he does, somebody will be disappointed.

As a former editor of the *Harvard Law Review* and then a constitutional law instructor at the University of Chicago,

the senator is accustomed to looking at issues from every angle. But sometimes it's impossible to close the gap between two sides.

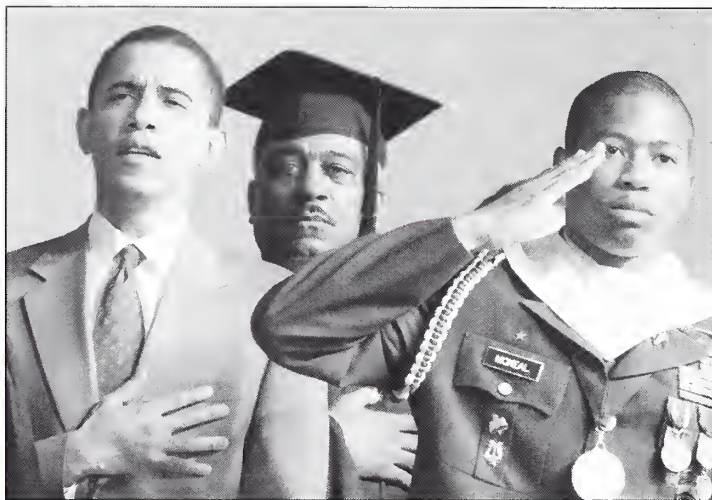
Obama says he finds that especially true when it comes to abortion and immigration. "Abortion is always a tough issue," he says, "because you can't split the difference in a way you can in a budget issue." And on immigration, Obama thinks there's a "legitimate concern" the United States isn't controlling its own borders, leading to depressed wages at the low end of the economy. Yet he says it's tough to find solutions that aren't "steeped in historic xenophobia."

Even on less volatile issues, the legislative process in Congress — where logrolling goes virtually unchecked — results in measures that make up-and-down votes tricky, he says. "But most of the time," he explains in *The Audacity of Hope*, "legislation is a murky brew, the product of 100 compromises large and small, a blend of legitimate policy aims, political grandstanding, jerry-rigged regulatory schemes, and old-fashioned pork barrels. Often, as I read through the bills coming to the floor my first few months in the Senate, I was confronted with the fact that the principled thing was less clear than I had originally thought; that either an aye vote or a nay vote would leave me with some trace of remorse."

And every vote can leave a trail of second-guessers.

Yet even as the national media scrutinizes Obama's voting record in Washington, the senator faces heightened scrutiny for his activities closer to home, including a land deal with a campaign donor.

After his convention speech, Obama's financial fortunes sailed along with his political fortunes. *Dreams from My Father* topped the best-seller lists, and he agreed to a new book deal. In June 2005, he used some of the new money to buy a \$1.65 million house in Chicago's Kenwood neighborhood. At the same time, developer and political fundraiser



Obama listens to the National Anthem played by members of the Bronzeville Military Academy band in Chicago. He delivered the commencement address to students graduating from the academy.

Antoin "Tony" Rezko bought the undeveloped lot next door for \$625,000. Obama paid \$300,000 less than the asking price for his property, while Rezko paid a premium for his. Obama had let Rezko know about the available lot next to his and, the following January, Obama bought a strip of Rezko's lot for \$104,500.

Before any of these transactions took place, Rezko already was under scrutiny from federal prosecutors and the media for his role as a fundraiser and power broker in Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration. Then, last October, Rezko was indicted for trying to shake down millions of dollars from companies seeking business with the state.

Since the Obama-Rezko real estate arrangements came to light, the senator has apologized publicly, even calling them "bonheaded." He donated the \$11,000 Rezko contributed to his Senate campaign to charity.

"He and I never discussed any government dealings," Obama says. "I was never in a position to provide him assistance. It was a mistake, in terms of appearance, to purchase land from a contributor."

Canary with the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform says the Rezko incident shows a danger Obama faces in light of his sudden superstar status. Obama's ability to talk directly to voters — to be a hit on both the Oprah Winfrey Show and Monday Night Football — means plenty of people will try to use his star power for their own ends.

"It's not that he owes a lot of political favors to people. It's that there are a lot of people out there who want to trade on his political capital. ... So he does need to be in a bit of a defensive position," she says.

Canary points to two endorsements Obama made last year that, she says, run counter to his good-government credentials. First, Obama appeared in TV commercials for Alexi Giannoulias when Giannoulias was an underdog state treasurer candidate in the Democratic primary. The newcomer beat out the party

favorite, despite questions over loans that Giannoulias' family bank gave to reputed mobsters.

Then Obama backed the candidacy of Todd Stroger to take Stroger's father's place as Cook County Board president. The younger Stroger became the Democratic nominee after the primary election in which his father, who suffered a stroke a week before the election, defeated a candidate who was calling for reform.

Obama hasn't backed away from either endorsement, though he did prod Giannoulias to provide more details about his family's bank. As for the Rezko deals, the senator says it won't diminish his ability to push for ethics reform in Washington.

"I've never made claims that I've been flawless," Obama says. "But that doesn't prevent me from offering improvements."

Further, McGehee with the Campaign Legal Center in Washington says Obama's interest in ethics is one reason government reform tops the agenda for the incoming Congress.

"Obama is the hottest commodity in Washington at the moment," she says. "Any issue he puts his name on gets attention." □

Daniel C. Vock, a reporter for Washington, D.C.-based Stateline.org and a former Illinois Statehouse bureau chief for the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, is a frequent contributor to Illinois Issues.

New order

The changeover in Congress isn't all bad for Illinois

by Aaron Chambers

One of your own as speaker of the U.S. House, the most powerful individual on Capitol Hill? It doesn't get any better than that.

Illinois enjoyed that designation for eight years when Republican Dennis Hastert, a former history teacher and wrestling coach from Yorkville, held the post. Now it's California's turn — Democrat Nancy Pelosi's turn — with the speaker's gavel.

The new makeup of Congress is not all bad news for Illinois, though. When the 110th Congress began work last month, with Democrats assuming control of both chambers for the first time since 1995, other members of the state's delegation gained considerable influence.

Democrat Richard Durbin of Springfield became the No. 2 ranking member of the U.S. Senate. And, while Democrat Barack Obama of Chicago is just beginning his third year on Capitol Hill, he does so with great political capital.

"A lot of people owe Barack a favor," Durbin says. "In the course of the last few years, he has helped more senators raise money and get re-elected than anyone else in the Senate. And so when Barack asks for something, for help for Illinois or help with a bill, I think people will do their best to help him."

Obama, who has been considering a candidacy for president in 2008, returns the compliment: "Dick Durbin is going to have an enormous amount of clout in terms of helping to shape the debate on the floor of the Senate."

Across the Capitol rotunda, other Illinois Democrats gained ground. Rep. Rahm

Emanuel of Chicago, the architect of that party's takeover of the U.S. House, began his third term in the chamber's No. 4 ranking position, caucus chairman.

The role traditionally is mostly ceremonial, but Emanuel is expected to have more substantial duties over such matters as party policy and strategy for protecting vulnerable incumbents. This was apparent when the Democrats detailed their policy agenda early last month. Emanuel was a public face of his team.

At the same time, other Illinois Democrats are now leading powerful subcommittees. Rep. Luis Guterrez of Chicago is chairman of a subcommittee

dealing with domestic and international monetary policy and Rep. Jerry Costello of Belleville is chairman of a subcommittee on aviation.

Anticipating their enhanced power on Capitol Hill, Gutierrez and Democratic Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. each said after the November election that he won't run for mayor of Chicago this spring.

On the other hand, the partisan changeover in Congress means reduced influence for Peoria Republican Rep. Ray LaHood on the powerful House Appropriations Committee. It means Rep. Donald Manzullo, an Egan Republican, no longer chairs the Small Business Committee.

"At the end of the day, are we going to be as effective as we were when Denny Hastert was speaker? Of course not," says Rep. Tim Johnson, an Urbana Republican. "But are we still going to be an effective group of 19 representatives and two senators who can advocate for the state? Yes, I think we are."

The state's delegation is comprised of 10 Democrats and nine Republicans, the same as in the previous Congress, though there are two new members. Rep. Phil Hare, a Rock Island Democrat, replaced U.S. Rep. Lane Evans, another Rock Island Democrat who retired because of Parkinson's disease. Hare was a longtime aide to Evans. Rep. Peter Roskam, a Wheaton Republican, replaced retired Rep. Henry Hyde, the GOP stalwart from Wood Dale. Roskam, a trial lawyer, served 13 years in the General Assembly, where he was known for his pointed criticism of Democratic initiatives during floor debate.

Nationally, Democrats hold a modest



U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel (at the mikes) and U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin discussing the Welcome Home GI Bill with representatives of the VFW, the American Legion and the state.

majority of 51 votes in the Senate, two more than Republicans in that chamber. Over in the House, the margin is larger. Democrats now hold a 233-202 edge.

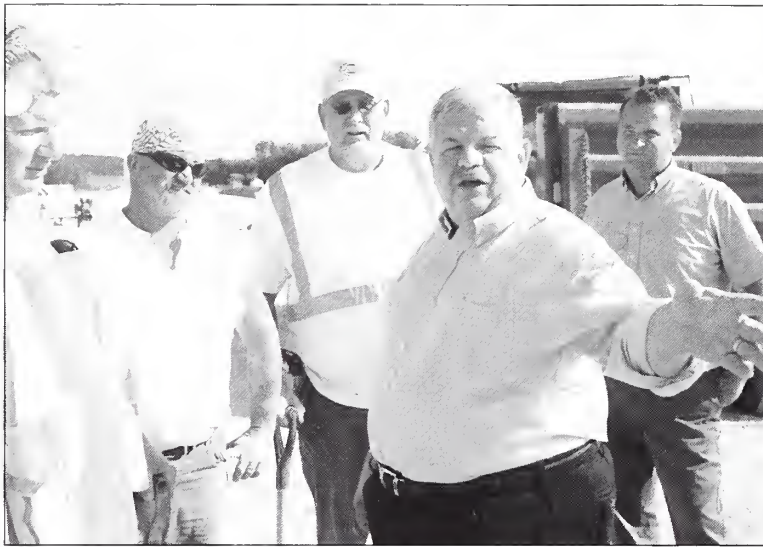
However narrow their advantage, Democrats have an ambitious agenda for the 110th Congress. They promised to raise the minimum wage, expand stem cell research, push the federal government to negotiate better prices for prescription drugs offered through Medicare and reduce the cost of student loans. They say they also will rein in the influence of lobbyists while spotlighting the inner workings of Congress, all in the name of ethics. And they intend to begin the process of steering American troops home from Iraq.

Closer to home, the state's delegation is working to land FutureGen, a cutting-edge coal-burning power plant that will be sponsored by the federal government. Mattoon and Tuscola are finalists for the plant. The delegation also is pushing the feds to build in this state a rare isotope accelerator — a tool for studying nuclear physics.

That's not to say there's complete unanimity of interests. An ideological shift in Congress could, for instance, favor Chicago and other major Illinois cities if the Democrats push policies that benefit urban communities. Rep. Dan Lipinski, a Chicago Democrat, says he'll promote expanded federal support of mass transit.

"There was a shift under the Republicans that operating expenses were not paid for with federal dollars. Infrastructure was, but not the operating expenses," Lipinski says. "I'm hoping that we may be able to change that, although we'll be in tight budgets. I believe the Democrats understand the importance of mass transit; it may be more important to Democratic areas than to Republican areas."

That's what Collinsville Republican Rep. John Shimkus fears. He says his downstate constituents stand to lose if the Democrats advance a liberal social agenda. "There are conservative Democrats and



Then-candidate Phil Hare talks with a road construction team in the Quad Cities.

liberal Republicans, but for the most part the majority of liberals are Democrats and the majority of conservatives are Republicans," Shimkus says. "So when you're not in power, the ideological debate moves to whichever party is in power. So I think central and southern Illinois will definitely be disadvantaged by Democratic control because they believe in bigger government."

Democrats recognize they must avoid a big government image. Costello, who also represents a downstate district, says it would not behoove the Democrats to veer too far left from center. "For the last six years, we have seen a Congress that has come from the far right. And I think some in the far right expect that Nancy Pelosi, who is very liberal, will govern from the far left," he says. "But she will not govern from the far left because those of us who are Democrats in the Democratic caucus do not want to govern from the far left. We are where the American people are, which is generally in the middle."

Costello predicts the Democrats will focus their reign on challenging the decisions of Republican President George W. Bush. They've wasted no time. In January, they began a series of hearings on the war in Iraq.

"For the last six years, there has been a lack of oversight of the administration and of governmental agencies. No-bid contracts going to Halliburton and other no-bid contracts, both through [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] and the Department of Defense, have gone

unquestioned," Costello says. "I think that one of the things that the American people said on November 7 is that they want accountability. They want a check and balance."

Beyond that, the Democrats pledge a new tone for Congress. "We're going to have, I hope, a kinder, gentler Congress," Hare says, "where we can get open debates and let people go to the floor and offer amendments and be able to discuss the bills. We will be an inclusive Congress, not an exclusive one like we had before."

George H.W. Bush used the same expression —

calling for "a kinder, gentler nation" — during his 1988 campaign for president. It was an apparent attempt to distinguish himself from the hard-right edge of predecessor Ronald Reagan.

Similarly, the Democrats are determined to convince the public they will lead Capitol Hill without such a hard edge — without being ideologically overzealous and intolerant of the minority view. This won't be easy over the long term as Republicans will be on alert for any hint Democrats are shutting them out.

Rep. Judy Biggert, a Hinsdale Republican, says Democrats in early January were slow to share details of their much-touted "first 100 hours" plan. If Democrats shroud their agenda in secrecy, she says, "I think that's going to raise a red flag very fast."

It's a delicate balance that Democrats must strike to govern from the center. While leaders such as Pelosi are renowned liberals, their freshman class has a decidedly conservative tilt. In his coordinated national campaign, Emanuel deliberately recruited more conservative Democrats to unseat Republicans in districts and states thought to lean Republican. Eighteen of the 29 Democrats who unseated House Republicans belong to the pro-business New Democrat Coalition, the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, or both, according to *Congressional Quarterly*.

Rep. Melissa Bean, a Barrington Democrat who is beginning her second term, belongs to the Blue Dog group, and she says the influence of both groups is

growing. "As that [Blue Dog] caucus grows, along with the New Democrats, which is also a pro-growth and centrist group, as well — what it does is makes us very much a part of the mix," she says.

For now, the Democrats aim to pre-empt any image of a do-nothing, Democrat-led Congress by pledging to make lawmakers spend more time working in Washington. Any grumbling on that score isn't obvious in Illinois. "If you're driving a UPS truck or you're a farmer, you get up every day and you have to work every day," Hare says. "So if it's good enough for people in Illinois, it's good enough for Congress. When I worked in a clothing store, I would work 60 or 70 hours."

Besides the political risks of appearing too liberal or ideological, the Democrats must reconcile that slim 51-vote majority in the Senate.

"In the United States Senate it takes 60 votes to do anything significant," Durbin says. "As a member of the minority, I thought that was a wonderful precedent, rule, tradition. In the majority I look at it a little differently. But the fact is that in order to pass anything significant, I need nine Republican senators to cross the aisle."

Obama says he looks forward to hearings on bills he couldn't advance when Republicans had control. However, he may not be able to win approval for those bills without bipartisan support. "It's pretty simple arithmetic," Obama says. "If you don't achieve unanimity in the Democratic caucus and get at least nine Republican votes, then you can be blocked from moving issues forward. And that's not a lot of margin for error."

Determined to appear truly interested in making Congress more transparent and accountable, the Democrats acted quickly to reform budget earmarks — grants lawmakers attach to the federal budget. Often it isn't clear which lawmaker is seeking the grant, or why, and in the past year, the controversial process came to symbolize a Congress more interested in back-room deals with lobbyists than in transparency for the public good.

When the 109th Congress adjourned in December, the Senate failed to act on nine appropriations bills containing most of the



Then-U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert autographs his book for then-state Sen. Peter Roskam's daughter.

earmarks lawmakers put to the side. Now Democrats promise to revamp the process, shedding more light on who asked for which dollars.

Both parties support the concept of earmarks. Despite reports about abuses and wasteful spending, lawmakers say they need the budget mechanism to tend to specific needs in their districts. "Eliminating earmarks does not save money," Manzullo says. "It just puts more money back in the hands of the unelected bureaucrats."

The day after they assumed control in January, however, House Democrats amended the chamber's rules governing earmarks. Members must now provide justification for each earmark and certify that it will not benefit lawmakers or their spouses.

Procedural or ideological issues aside, members of the Illinois congressional delegation credit themselves with strong bipartisan cooperation.

"I think the voters have the expectation that the Illinois delegation will be able to put aside donkeys and elephants when that's appropriate to help direct as much support to Illinois as possible," says Roskam.

And Manzullo says the close working relationship within the delegation, regardless of who occupies the White House or which party controls Congress, is its hallmark. He therefore believes the delegation can continue to serve Illinois just as it did in the previous Congress.

"The bottom line is that I see no

significant change in the things that I can do for my district and the things that all of us in Illinois can do for each other," he says.

Yes, the speaker of the U.S. House has tremendous influence over the chamber's agenda. For eight years, Hastert had the power to block spending plans and other legislation that did not sufficiently favor Illinois. He helped secure federal dollars for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield and presided over the massive federal transportation program approved in 2005. That five-year plan, worth \$286.4 billion, promises \$9.4 billion for Illinois.

Hastert announced after the November election he would resign from House Republican leadership, though he said he would continue serving in Congress as a rank-and-file member. He may continue to wield influence. As Johnson says, "Denny Hastert is not going to just fade into the woodwork and do nothing positive for the state or his district or for the collective delegation. He still has a good staff, and he still continues to have friends throughout the process on both sides of the aisle and in the executive branch of government."

But it's clear that he won't have nearly as much clout.

"Let's acknowledge the obvious: There is no more powerful position on Capitol Hill than the position of speaker of the House," Durbin says. "Denny Hastert of Illinois, as speaker, did more for our state than any single individual of the House or Senate could hope to accomplish. No one is going to step into a position that is as close to the power of speaker."

The loss of that power was immediately visible. As Pelosi took the gavel in early January, Hastert stood slumping beside Republicans in the rear of the chamber with arms folded.

Some Republicans aim to make the best of the new order. LaHood says that he must work to cultivate support from Democrats in order to accomplish his goals. He says he's friends with both Durbin and Emanuel. "There's nobody more bipartisan," he says, "than Ray LaHood." □

Aaron Chambers is Statehouse reporter for the Rockford Register Star.

Small panel, major players

The five decision-makers at the Illinois Commerce Commission often find themselves in the crossfire of industrial-sized political forces

by **Bethany Carson**

The Illinois Commerce Commission keeps a relatively low profile. That is, until it finds itself in the middle of a public firestorm.

The prospect of higher utility bills sparked the most recent controversy for the commission as a decade-old state law freezing electric rates went off the books. In the coming months, the cost and configuration of telephone service could generate noise because state regulation

of the communications industry is set to expire, too.

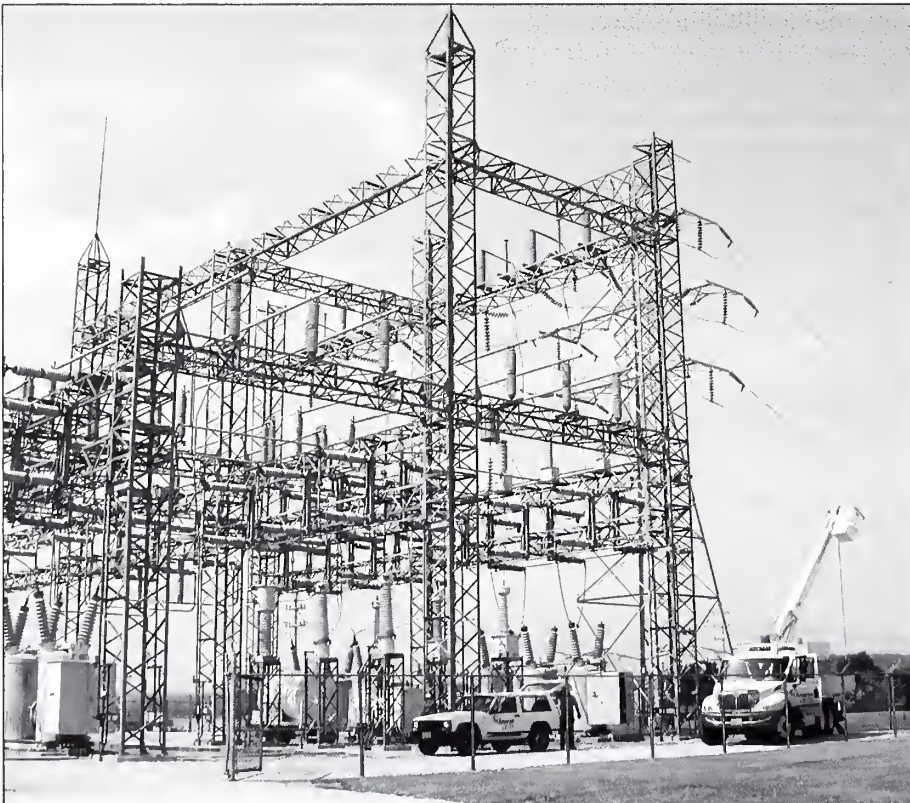
More often, it seems, the five-member commission is caught in the political crossfire simply because the commodities and services it oversees are vital to daily life and to the state's economy. Major corporations have huge stakes in each and every ruling. As do consumers.

So who are these decision-makers? At the moment, they include a former

energy expert, a former school superintendent and a former assistant attorney general. The current chairman, Charles Box, is the former mayor of Rockford.

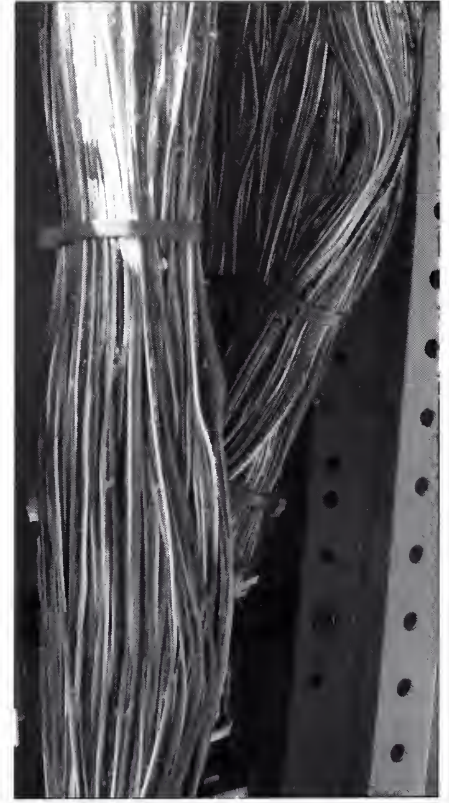
Three of the commissioners are Democrats — the maximum number of members allowed for any one party — and one commissioner is a Republican. A vacancy came open this month, and it will be up to the governor to make that five-year appointment, subject to Senate approval.

Photograph courtesy of Ameren Corp.



This Ameren Illinois utility substation is a key component of the electricity distribution system.

Photograph courtesy of the Illinois Commerce Commission



Illinois' telecom law is up for renewal.

Four of the commissioners make \$99,414 a year. The chairman pulls in \$113,836.

Commissioners aren't required to have particular expertise, but they have nearly 300 specialized analysts, engineers and administrative law judges at their disposal. Nevertheless, as a group, they've shown considerable foresight on technological advances over the decades, even joining a handful of commissioners in other states at beating the feds to the punch on deregulation of the communications market in the mid-'90s.

In fact, being a generalist might be an advantage for the member of a panel charged with making decisions that affect the services consumers use to flush their toilets, plug in their toasters, heat their buildings, access the Internet, move the family or ship nuclear waste. Such decisions are bound by state law, of course. In theory, the commissioners are insulated from the political fray.

That's not to say their decisions don't have political ramifications.

"Any change is going to engender political discussion," says Beth Bosch, commission spokeswoman. There's no

surprise there, she says, "but the fact is, we have to do what we need to do [under] the law."

In fact, the commission's job is defined by the state's 1921 Public Utilities Act. But the scope of its responsibility has been expanded since 1871, when the Railroad and Warehouse Commission was created. Over the decades, the legislature has gradually added to the commission's purview: railroads, electricity, natural gas, water and sewer, telecommunications, moving companies and even some homeland security.

The electricity rate increases scheduled to begin last month offer a prime example of the controversial decisions commissioners have made. Power regulation generates so much political heat because the commodity is so essential.

"It is the engine that drives the Illinois economy," says former commissioner Kevin Wright, whose term ended last month. "If you lose your telephone service at home, it's an inconvenience. If you lose your electric service, it's catastrophic. The politics of it, the importance of electricity, has raised this to a much more visible and more difficult

level [in the] transition away from the old way of doing business."

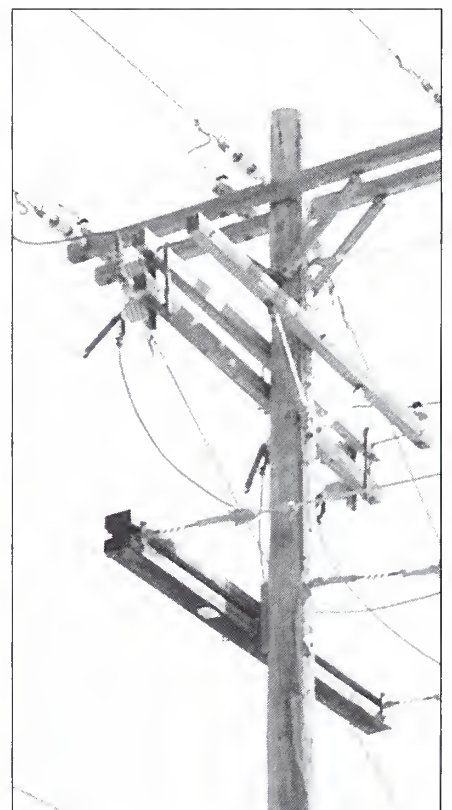
The major change is in the way power is purchased, says Martin Cohen, former director of the consumer watchdog group Citizens Utility Board. Cohen served six weeks on the commission until the Senate rejected his appointment over an argument that he was too consumer-oriented to be objective. Now he is Gov. Rod Blagojevich's director of consumer affairs.

"This whole discussion is not about the way power flows. It's about the way money flows," Cohen says. "And the power plants that we will be buying from [this] year are the same power plants we were buying from last year, regardless of who your supplier is."

The electric power suppliers are the major utilities. Commonwealth Edison in northern Illinois and Ameren Corp. in Illinois south of Interstate 80 distribute power to 95 percent of the state's electricity customers, according to Harry Stoller, director of the commission's energy division.

These Illinois utilities are connected to even bigger industry players. Exelon Corp. is the parent company of ComEd.

Photographs courtesy of the Illinois Commerce Commission



The ICC also regulates railroad safety, water companies and electric companies.

Over the past few months, the controversy pitted the huge utilities against the state's top legislative leaders. Regardless, the commission had to enact rules under existing law.

Ameren Corp. has three Illinois subsidiaries, AmerenCILCO, Ameren-CIPS and AmerenIP.

While a federal commission regulates the parent companies and has made it harder for them to manipulate the energy market to benefit their smaller subsidiary companies, the Illinois commission operates within those larger economic and political forces.

Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, for one, says the commission dropped the ball by setting electricity rates through a type of auction he — and Attorney General Lisa Madigan — believes violates the intent of the 1997 state utility deregulation law and resulted in a bad deal for consumers.

“I think this is the biggest [issue to face] Illinois and really for the next generation,” he says. “It’s a huge battle, and it’s going to define who really calls the shots in utility matters. Is it a powerful couple of companies with highly paid, millionaire executives, or are the people of Illinois going to have a say-so?”

The regulatory environment was different a decade ago, and the commission has had to react to forces that are out of its control — federal regulations, industry changes and economic trends.

Ten years ago, the Illinois commission oversaw all-in-one power companies that generated, transmitted and distributed energy. But the 1997 state law allowed Illinois utilities to sell off their power generating assets, which relieved the commission from overseeing the cost of nuclear, coal and gas-fired power plants.

About the same time, federal regulations reshaped the state’s “electricity

footprint,” says Bosch, the commission spokeswoman.

Utility companies now purchase power from unregulated generating companies and deliver that power to retail customers. Further, federal rules now allow power companies to ship electricity across state borders. This has created an industry that is regulated more at the federal and regional level. In effect, the Illinois commission has largely been reduced to overseeing the resale and delivery of power to retail customers, says former Commissioner Wright.

Appointed in 2002 by Gov. George Ryan, Wright says the 1997 law did at least three good things. First, it decreased residential electricity rates by 20 percent and froze them for nine years to protect customers from volatile energy prices. Second, it shielded customers from inefficient power companies that were plaguing the industry at the time by shifting the companies’ operating and new construction costs to investors and shareholders. And third, it required utilities to join independent, nonprofit organizations that operate a regional transmission grid and manage competitive wholesale electricity markets.

But Wright also says he counts three possible mistakes. He believes electricity rates were frozen for too long without a gradual transition to market-based rates, which he says could have eased the rate shock and encouraged more competition.

Two, he says it’s more difficult now for the commission to detect anti-competitive behavior within state borders. That’s because the federal commission regulates competitive wholesale power markets, where utilities buy power for retail customers. The state commission only oversees the rates utilities charge, the utilities’ purchase of power and the reliability and maintenance of the delivery system.

And three, Wright says the law may not have gone far enough in separating the state-regulated delivery utilities from their unregulated parent companies and their generating affiliates, something that he says could help prevent preferential treatment at the expense of consumers.

Over the past few months, the controversy pitted the huge utilities against the state’s top legislative leaders. Regardless, the commission had to enact rules under existing law.

For instance, the commission took steps to allow companies to offer a phase-in for customers’ electricity rate increases. Meanwhile, three top legislative leaders pushed two competing pieces of legislation that grabbed headlines. One would freeze electric rates again; the other would phase in the rate increases while changing the Illinois commission’s ability to review rates. If either proposal becomes law, it will be up to the commissioners to interpret it and determine the best course of action.

“We have to take what’s in records

Electricity rate freeze stalls in the legislature

While residents and businesses faced higher electricity bills last month, the Illinois legislature debated two competing measures to ease their burden.

The first measure was intended to freeze electricity rates for three more years — on top of the nine years they had been frozen. But that measure stalled in the Senate last month. House Speaker Michael Madigan and consumer advocates supported a rate freeze to negate increases under a type of energy auction that deregulated the way utilities buy and distribute electricity to retail customers.

Senate President Emil Jones Jr. supported a different plan to phase in the rate increases for all electricity consumers between 2007 and 2009. Part of the plan would allow utilities to collect some money from consumers in the form of new fees, which utilities say would help them maintain reliable services and repay bond debt.

The absence of legislative action means customers’ electricity rates will increase, but residents, small businesses and municipalities still have the option of phasing in the higher costs with interest. They would have to repay the deferred amount between 2010 and 2012.

Bethany Carson

before us as judges do and make a decision,” says Chairman Box. “But being a commissioner is more of a balancing act. What’s in the best interest of the consumers, and, at the same time, the impact that it would have on the businesses that we regulate?”

Even after the utility debate subsides, the commission is required to review last September’s energy auction, a process that deregulated the way utilities buy and distribute electricity to residents and businesses. The new system requires utilities to buy electricity at market-based rates, a cost they can pass on to consumers. As Bosch says, “Very few things are ever really over.”

Meanwhile, expiration of the telecommunications law will force lawmakers to decide whether it needs to be rewritten to reflect changes in technology. That could cause another industrial-sized political debate.

Currently, the commission only regulates basic telephone services, but even that’s not black and white anymore.

“The fundamental question of what is telephone service is up in the air,” says Cohen, the former CUB director. “Right now, we have a national policy of very light-handed, if any, regulation of all things digital. Well, everything will be digital soon enough, and that raises questions about whether there’s a need or a will to regulate phone service in the future and at what level.”

There’s already a push for deregulation from such major companies as AT&T, says Box. Four months ago, the commission declared that Chicago-area telephone services were competitive enough to lift state rate controls. The commissioners’ 5-0 vote defied opposition from such consumer advocates as CUB and the Illinois attorney general’s office, which feared low-income customers would be forced to pay higher prices for basic telephone services.

Legislators could decide whether to follow in the footsteps of Indiana, which created a statewide video franchise, allowing telecommunications companies to buy access to local wires through the state rather than through individual municipalities.

The major telecommunications players, then, might apply pressure to keep up with Indiana’s deregulated market,

which they find more attractive for doing business than Illinois’ regulatory environment. On the other hand, such consumer advocates as the Citizens Utility Board and the Illinois attorney general will continue to be a voice for the low-income consumers who would

be affected by higher prices under a deregulated phone industry.

Telecommunications has the potential to generate another heated debate among some of the largest political and industry players — and plenty of controversy for the commission. □

The decision-makers

The Illinois Commerce Commission has five members appointed by the governor for five-year terms. They come from a variety of backgrounds but oversee some of the state’s most complicated industries.

Chairman Charles Box, Democrat

Appointed: January 2006 by Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Term ends January 2011.

Home: Rockford

He has served 20 years in Rockford’s government as mayor, city administrator and legal director.

Commissioner Lula Ford, Democrat

Appointed: January 2003 by Blagojevich. Term ends January 2008.

Home: Chicago

She is a former math and science teacher, a school principal and a superintendent for Chicago Public Schools. She became assistant director of Central Management Services under Blagojevich in 1999 before being appointed to the commission.

Commissioner Robert Lieberman, Democrat

Appointed: February 2005 by Blagojevich. Term ends January 2010.

Home: Chicago

He formerly managed the Division of Energy and Environment Assessment for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. He also spent 18 years as director of the Office of Research and Planning, manager of the Energy Planning Section and policy analyst for the Office of Coal Development.

Commissioner Erin O’Connell-Diaz, Republican

Appointed: April 2003 by Blagojevich. Term ends January 2008.

Home: Bull Valley

She served as an assistant attorney general in the General Law Division of the Illinois Attorney General’s office. She oversaw such cases as construction contracts and prisoner civil rights. In 1991, she was appointed an administrative law judge for the Illinois Commerce Commission and became assistant director of the division. She also chaired the Chicago Bar Association’s Public Utility Law Division.

Former Commissioner Kevin Wright, Independent

Appointed: September 2002 by Gov. George Ryan. Term ended January 2007. He could be reappointed.

Home: Springfield

He previously served under two Republican administrations, including 10 years with Gov. James Thompson, seven years with Secretary of State George Ryan and a few years with Ryan when he became governor until Wright joined the commission. As a commissioner, he became president of a regional committee of 14 Midwestern public utility commissions that serves as a regional voice on transmission issues pending before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission at the Midwest Independent System Operator.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

A new agency consolidates land-use and transportation planning to meet the challenges of growth in metropolitan Chicago

by Randy Blankenhorn

In existence for just over a year now, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) aims to transform the way planning is conducted and investment decisions are made for the seven-county region in northeastern Illinois, both at the regional and local levels.

That is an ambitious objective, but what's at stake is the continuing livability of our communities. The challenge for our region and its leaders is to pursue lofty ideals while keeping everyday realities firmly in mind.

Regionally and locally, those realities are increasingly stark. The seven counties served by CMAP — Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will — face an additional 2 million residents and 1.2 million more jobs by 2030. The metropolitan area has the nation's third-worst traffic delays, which likely will worsen unless Illinois stops tapping into capital funds to cover the costs of operating our world-class transportation system. Natural resources are abundant, but under increasing pressure because of the rate of land

development. The agricultural character in parts of northeastern Illinois is eroding. The region's eastern border is Lake Michigan, one of the world's largest freshwater resources, but shortages of drinking water are projected in coming years. All of

these challenges require a comprehensive approach that builds connections across topic areas and geographical boundaries.

Some observers mistakenly regard many such "traditional" planning issues as being in conflict with the need for economic

development and the long Illinois tradition of local autonomy. CMAP believes this represents a false choice. Instead, our view is that jobs and prosperity will literally depend on our success at guiding growth in ways that preserve overall quality of life.

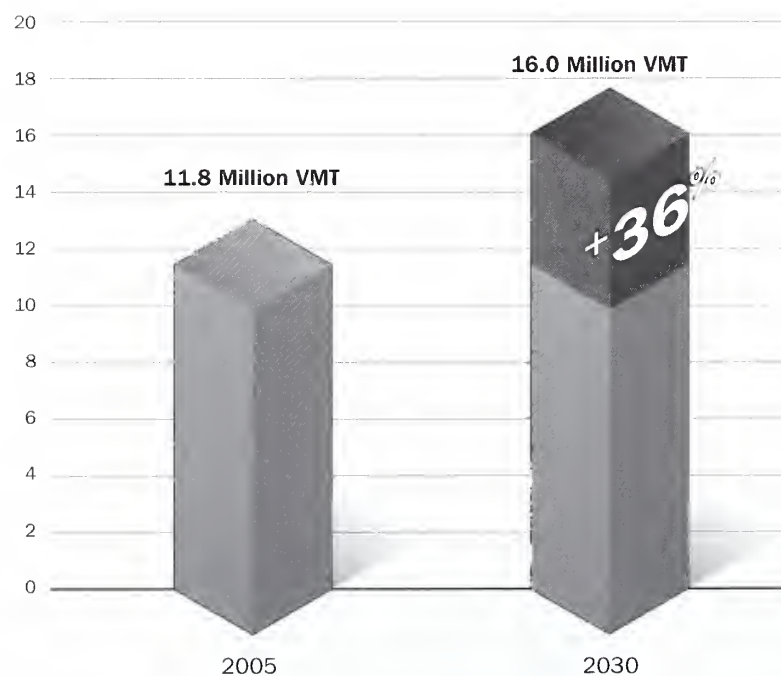
If that sounds simple, it really is not. Getting there requires a collaborative effort in which communities focus on the long-term goals they have in common rather than on the short-term factors that might separate them.

The November 2006 edition of *Illinois Issues* contains a guest essay, "The hitch in the plan," which raises an important question: Without regulatory authority, how does a regional agency shape local decisions? The CMAP Board believes strongly that establishing

2030 Arterial Congestion

Even with a modest capital program, the number of daily congested vehicle miles on arterials is expected to increase **36%** from **11.8 million** to **16.0 million**.

In millions of *VMT



* Vehicle Miles Traveled

Source: Chicago Area Transportation Study 2006 Congestion Management System Status Report, 2003 Air Quality Conformity Analysis

intergovernmental cooperation with a strong local commitment to planning is critical to creating and implementing a vision for the future of northeastern Illinois.

Good planning without implementation is better than no planning at all — but not much. The metropolitan region has traditionally suffered from a disconnect between high-minded plans and what actually happens on the ground with decisions regarding land use and transportation.

Such a lack of follow-through is what prompts some to advocate a top-down regulatory approach. That is not CMAP's preferred strategy because, among other drawbacks, it can be counterproductive for a region striving to improve its position in the global economy. But there is much that can be done to build intergovernmental cooperation, in part by providing better information and tools to clarify the consequences of decisions. For example, despite years of investment in roads, congestion has been getting worse. CMAP has the data and analytical expertise to explain just why traffic problems are accelerating, and we want to use those insights to help the region chart a new course in the ways transportation infrastructure investments are made.

The region faces a shortage of funds for transportation, but the solution is not to spend our way out of these problems. Capital projects must be selected based on regionally approved evaluation criteria that produce agreed-upon results. We can no longer afford to select projects that do not meet the region's basic need to improve transportation and other infrastructure systems in ways that strengthen our communities.

By making that case for fiscal responsibility and strategic investment, CMAP wants to help convince the public, the General Assembly and the governor that the continued economic success of the Chicago region depends on a new capital program to maintain and expand the region's road, transit and freight rail systems, while also building and

maintaining water treatment facilities, schools, open space and other necessary infrastructure. Without new investment dollars, we risk losing our competitive advantage.

Bringing the business community to the planning table is an important CMAP innovation. Like others in the region, business leaders are frustrated by traffic snarls, the lack of affordable housing and other factors that erode our economic competitiveness. Too often, those voices have not been heard in the debate over how to shape growth through land use planning and transportation. By the same token, planners' concerns often have been disregarded when decisions get made over how land will be developed.

Neighbors may compete to attract investment in the global economy, but urban and suburban communities must act as members of the same team because their futures and fortunes are intertwined.

Growth is clearly coming to northeastern Illinois. Working together as a region, we can shape these trends instead of passively letting them shape our communities. That's how growth can become real progress rather than something that erodes quality of life. To that end, CMAP will provide leadership by giving decision-makers a new regional context for their choices regarding land use and transportation. Collaborating with our partners and deploying advanced tools for data research and analysis, CMAP will evaluate the potential impacts of those decisions, which

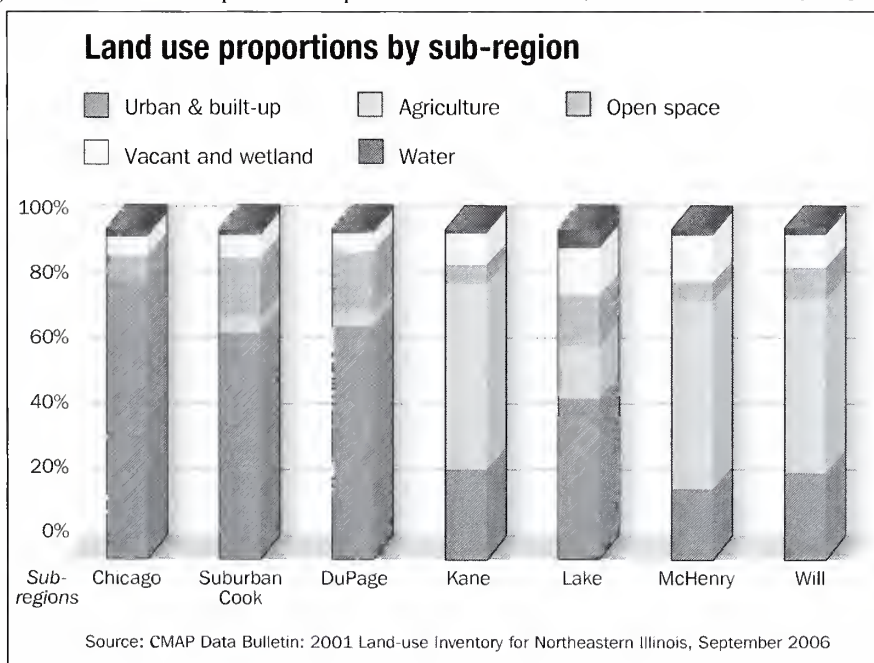
Growth is clearly coming to northeastern Illinois. Working together as a region, we can shape these trends instead of passively letting them shape our communities.

influence our communities' character and our quality of life. Land use and transportation are deeply intertwined, and they also affect housing, natural resources and economic development, among other regional priorities.

This approach is detailed in the CMAP report to Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the Illinois General Assembly, which formed the new agency by merging the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC). It includes strategic guidance on governance and funding, which will be an important part of CMAP's legislative agenda for the General Assembly's spring session.

Above all, CMAP is striving to ensure that the agency's work is relevant to our constituents across the metropolitan region. That means building programs and capacities that potential sponsors want to fund and that facilitate good decision-making at the local and regional levels. □

Randy Blankenhorn is executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. More information is available at www.chicagoareaplanning.org.



CAPITOL RESTORATION

In less than a year, the Illinois Statehouse returns to its original French-influenced style of the late 1800s

Essay and photographs by Bethany Carson

One hundred and eighteen years after construction was completed on Illinois' sixth state Capitol, the House and Senate chambers have been restored to resemble the plush style envisioned by architects John Cochrane of Chicago and Alfred Piquenard of France.

Since last spring, hundreds of specialized workers have toiled around the clock to restore history. At the same time, they upgraded the heating and air conditioning system, fire safety features, Internet capabilities and wheelchair accessibility.

In the process, they discovered ornate details that had disappeared beneath layers of paint. Throughout both chambers, some committee rooms and the rotunda, artists from New York-based EverGreene Painting Studios uncovered original murals. They compared the images to black-and-white photographs of the time and analyzed chips of paint to find the original colors. Then they assembled the puzzle to recreate the late 1800's style.



The first-floor ceiling in the archways that lead to the center of the rotunda was transformed from solid cream panels to decorative murals.



The House chamber, seen in the middle of renovation last November, is expected to be unveiled in early February.



Tim Mapes, chief of staff for House Speaker Michael Madigan, views the renovations from the scaffolding used to install a new antique lay light in the ceiling.

The public's first glimpse of the transformation is in the first floor rotunda, where many visitors snap pictures of the kaleidoscopic dome. In seven months, the rotunda ceiling was transformed from a cream-colored circle to vaulted panels of vibrant murals.

Three floors up, the House and Senate chambers now have rust-colored, hand-sewn carpet, new and refinished wood paneling, new desks and gold-trimmed ceilings.

Senate construction wrapped up in time for the chamber to be used in January. The House renovation required removing asbestos and upgrading the heating and air conditioning. That chamber is expected to be ready the first week in February.

Coordinating and overseeing the entire project was Donald McLarty, architect of the Capitol, and co-chairs of the Office of the Architect, Tim Mapes and Linda Hawker. Mapes is chief of staff for House Speaker Michael Madigan. Hawker is the retired secretary of the Senate. □



A mural on the ceiling of a first-floor committee room is painted in sky blue, white and gold to make it look like a Victorian skylight.



Rehabilitation of the Senate was completed by January. Rust-colored, hand-sewn carpet and roll-down desks are new. The majority of the wood in the chamber is refinished mahogany.



Artists chipped away layers of paint in the rotunda ceiling so they could see patterns and analyze the colors used in the original murals.



The finished product uses shades of green, blue, rose and peach that match the marble throughout the Capitol.

Rick Beard

He's been director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum for three months. He comes to Illinois from Georgia, having worked the past two years as a consultant for museums and historical societies along the East Coast and in the Midwest. He was chief operating officer of the New-York Historical Society for two years and executive director of the Atlanta Historical Society for a decade prior to that.

**Rick Beard**

Beard also heads the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, the fundraising arm of the library and museum. He's president of Civil War 150: The Sesquicentennial Initiative, a nationwide effort to mark the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Gov. Rod Blagojevich also named Beard to the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission that will celebrate the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth.

Beard, who received his Ph.D. in American Studies from Emory University in Atlanta, is writing a book about the history of presidential campaigns.

This is an edited conversation with Beverley Scobell.

Q. What is your primary goal for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in 2007?

To get ready for 2008 — and 2009. I don't mean to be glib, but basically the primary goal is to get ready for the bicentennial [of Lincoln's birth], which is fast approaching. To put together a really robust program with exhibits and educational activities and things of that sort that we can both host here in Springfield and hopefully share with the people of Illinois.

Q. How do you describe your philosophy of presenting history to the public?

I think a museum needs to be about telling stories. I would never characterize myself as a storyteller, but I do think that what I've always tried to do in museums I've worked in is to develop topics and exhibitions and programs that are essentially narrative in nature, that do tell a story

about an individual, an event or a collection of events.

I am not an academic historian; I am a public historian. So I tend to believe that what museums — like the Abraham Lincoln [Presidential] Library and Museum — do is try to find the essence of the story and present it to the public in ways they are going to understand it and also be engaged with it. And that is different from what a historian in an academic university is doing.

I don't take credit for what was created here, but I think what was created here is the wave of the future with regard to history museums. You walk a fine line between creating an experience that is entertaining — and you want that — but at the end of the day what you're really about is education. How do you do that? How do you accomplish that? Any teacher will tell you the best way to do that is to engage people and engage their interest. And what engages somebody's interest today is a lot different from what it was 50 or 100 years ago. So technology becomes absolutely essential to all of this.

Q. What role do you see the library and museum playing as anniversaries associated with Lincoln arrive in the next few years — the bicentennial of his birth? The sesquicentennial of the Civil War?

I think we need to be one of the

premier players in both of those particular activities. It is an opportunity to educate not just a general visitor, but schoolkids. There are ways to engage with academic historians that can be mutually beneficial. There are ways to use not just our physical facilities but use our intellectual resources to reach people through Web sites and all sorts of technological means.

I really think it's about seizing an opportunity. Part of the problem or challenge today for anybody doing anything related to history is to capture people's attention. Anniversaries are a good opportunity to do that because the national media picks up on these sorts of things and will provide a kind of visibility none of us can ever afford.

We're working on a number of exhibition and program ideas. We want to kick it off by looking at the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, the 150th anniversary of those happens next year. We're talking about a major traveling exhibit, perhaps of Lincoln. But there are a lot of ideas in play that we're sorting out.

Q. Do you see yourself building on the vision set by the first executive director, Richard Norton Smith? Or guiding the museum and library on a different course?

I don't think it's a different course. I think it's more about how an institution grows and develops. Richard is not just a brilliant historian of the presidency but quite a showman. He was the exact man to get the place open and publicly visible. I see my job now as taking the institution into its adolescence. In other words, creating a long-term vision that has programmatic aspects, financial aspects, operational aspects to it and beginning to implement that.

Everybody stands on the shoulders of their predecessor, I think. I am the beneficiary of the visibility that Richard gave the institution, and the wonderful start in terms of visitation and that sort. Now the job is different from what it was when Richard was here, so it's not about dismantling

anything he did, but simply doing some different things than he did because the times demand those things be done.

Q. *Your previous museum work has been primarily with private organizations. Yet the library/museum is owned by the state of Illinois and has its own history. Were you filled in on the politics?*

To some extent. I knew it was an institution that was complex, and it has this dimension of being part of state government, part of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. But I'm also the executive director for the [Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library] Foundation, which parallels the museum, so I'm sort of living in two worlds at the moment, which is fine. □

COMMEMORATION

Kay Smith will head Illinois' Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. She'll work with state and federal commissioners on Lincoln's 200th birthday celebration to be held in 2009.

BIT

Thomas Lyons

The chairman of the Cook County Democratic Party died January 12. He was 75.

His public service included tenure as a Chicago police officer and a state senator in the 1960s and '70s. He also was vice president of the 1969 convention that rewrote the state's constitution.

House Speaker Michael Madigan, chairman of the Illinois Democratic Party, said in a printed statement, "Tom will be remembered for his tireless work as a Democratic Party activist, his energetic efforts on behalf of candidates ranging from those who sought obscure local office to Bill Clinton's successful quest for the presidency and his countless contributions to charities and community organizations."

INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Secretary of the Senate retires

When the 95th General Assembly was sworn in on January 10, lawmakers said goodbye to **Linda Hawker**, the first woman secretary of the Senate.

Hawker retired after coordinating behind-the-scenes work for that chamber for two decades. She has spent 37 years in Illinois government.

She will be replaced by **Deborah Shipley**, who has been executive assistant to Senate President Emil Jones Jr. since 1995.

Hawker finished her final day at a podium that has been refurbished to resemble the chamber's original style from the late 1800s. As the first co-chair of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, she played an integral role in the Senate's portion of the nearly \$10 million renovation project of both legislative chambers. She says finishing the renovation last year and "doing it right" gave her tremendous pride.

She also takes pride in mentoring new lawmakers and staff, particularly women.

"She has been a mentor, a friend, a sounding board and always, always a solid guide for any issue that came across her desk," says Cindy Davidsmeyer, spokeswoman for Jones and a personal friend of Hawker's.

Her first day at the podium was in 1987, when Philip Rock was Senate president, but her service to the Senate Democratic leadership dates to 1971 when she worked for President Cecil Partee. She also worked for President Thomas Hynes.

She took time off to earn her bachelor's degree in political science from then-Sangamon State University, now the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Hawker credits her ability to do her job to some 32 full-time staffers, including those who are the brains behind the legislature's daily calendars to the janitors who show up at 4 a.m. Her office's work should be invisible when things go right, she adds.

But it's more visible than ever, thanks in part to Hawker's hand in making Senate proceedings available on the Internet and integrating a state-of-the-art voting system developed by Legislative Information Systems for the General Assembly.

"I really believe in the process," she says. "We don't do everything perfectly by any stretch, but this democracy gig is so far superior to whatever comes in second place."

Her dedication and integrity earned her the 2006 Staff Achievement Award from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Bethany Carson

Reprinted with permission from the Herald & Review, Decatur



This photograph of Linda Hawker was published in 1986 when she was campaign manager for the late Democratic state Sen. Penny Severns. Hawker was showing off campaign yard signs that were being made by volunteers after about 950 of the Severns signs were stolen and couldn't be ordered from a printer in time for the November election.

TRANSITIONS

- Former state Treasurer **Judy Baar Topinka** has become a member of the Regional Transportation Authority's board of directors. She represents suburban Cook County and serves on the committees that oversee audits and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Topinka lost her gubernatorial bid to incumbent Gov. Rod Blagojevich last November. She previously served two terms in the Illinois House and six terms in the Senate.

- **Paul Mangieri**, former Knox County state's attorney, has been appointed circuit judge in the 9th Judicial Circuit of western Illinois. He replaces retired Judge **Larry Heiser**.

Mangieri, a Galesburg resident, lost the Democratic nomination for state treasurer to Alexi Giannoulas last March. He previously ran for a seat in the state Senate now held by Sen. Dale Risinger, a Peoria Republican.

He was recommended for a seat in the circuit court by Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride.

Mangieri served as a judge advocate general in the U.S. Navy. He then practiced private law until his election as state's attorney. He served 10 years in that position.

- **Bryan Samuels**, former director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, was hired as chief of staff for Chicago Public Schools Chief Arne Duncan. Samuels managed DCFS for nearly four years under Gov. Blagojevich.

- **Betsy Steinberg**, an industry veteran in television and filmmaking productions, has been appointed by Gov. Blagojevich as managing director of the Illinois Film Office, responsible for attracting film and TV projects to the state. She replaces **Brenda Sexton**.

AND NOT

Robert Kjellander won't quit as national committeeman despite a vote by the GOP's state central committee.

Hispanic leader heads Chicago expositions



Juan Ochoa

Juan Ochoa was appointed chief executive officer of the metropolitan agency that owns and manages two of Chicago's economic engines, McCormick Place and Navy Pier.

Ochoa replaces **Leticia Peralta Davis** as head of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority. Gov. Rod Blagojevich appointed her to the authority in 2003. She stepped down in late 2006. Blagojevich then appointed Ochoa, who has been president of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for the past decade.

In 2001, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley appointed Ochoa to the board of the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority, which oversees U.S. Cellular Field and is responsible for the renovation of Soldier Field.

He is a former machine gunner in the U.S. Marine Corps and a veteran of the Gulf War.

As president of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, he saw the organization grow from 52 members with a \$45,000 budget to more than 1,200 members with a \$1.7 million budget. However, last spring, the Illinois legislature ordered the state attorney general to audit the chamber, which received more than \$1 million in state funds for economic development and training programs. Ochoa was unavailable for comment on that issue.

His next challenge includes repaying bond debt from the \$850 million expansion of McCormick Place, expected to be completed later this year, according to the facility's Web site.

Omar Duque is now the chamber's president and chief executive.

New head of humanities program to spur debate

Alice Kim is the new director of the Public Square at the Illinois Humanities Council.

Public Square is a program that aims to encourage people to participate in democracy by stimulating open debate. It creates forums on such issues as global warming and video-game violence.

One activity, for instance, is Café Society, which encourages groups to meet in public spaces such as coffee houses, and even a barber shop, to discuss issues of the day. The topics are e-mailed to participants beforehand and include links to articles about the chosen subject. Such events are held across the state, from Chicago to Carbondale. Another activity, Civic Cinema, gives people a chance to meet with producers of documentary films for in-depth discussions.

"The program has created a niche in Chicago," says Kim, who will be responsible for developing and implementing new activities for the Public Square.

"Kim is a wonderful communicator. She brings her experience in social justice, as well as a deep background in humanities, to the organization," says Kristina Valaitis, executive director of the council.

Kim is a 2004 recipient of the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World Award.

QUOTABLE

“I’m prepared to engage in unpopular choices. I’m prepared to engage in doing things which today may not be viewed so favorably, but down the road, there will be an acknowledgment that it was the right thing to do.”

House Speaker Michael Madigan in his inaugural address warning of “tough times ahead.” The Democrat cited a report on state finances by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, which concludes spending cuts are needed and tax hikes may be necessary to dig the state out of a budget deficit.



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Charles N. Wheeler III



The governor outlines a second term in the Magic Kingdom

by Charles N. Wheeler III

Since the late 1980s, “I’m going to Disney World!” has been the happy proclamation of Super Bowl winners, becoming one of the most recognizable advertising slogans in marketing history.

Champion athletes have nothing on Gov. Rod Blagojevich, though. As he started his second term last month, the Democratic governor was already in the Magic Kingdom. His Inaugural Address featured fairy tales such as the budget he supposedly balanced (he’s yet to do so) and his election “mandate” (most voters marked someone else for governor).

To his credit, the governor pledged to provide access to affordable, quality health care for all Illinoisans — a noble dream — but he offered no specifics on how to pay for universal health care, just as funding details remain uncertain for two of his first-term initiatives, health insurance for all children and universal preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds.

At the same time, Blagojevich avoided harsh realities like ethics reform and widespread inequities in funding public schools. The omissions may have been understandable, with federal prosecutors probing his administration’s hiring and contracting practices and his school finance “solution” — selling the state lottery — likely destined to be dead on arrival in the legislature.

But the issues merit serious attention when the legislature returns this month, as the rest of the state’s Democratic leadership seemed to appreciate,

His Inaugural Address featured fairy tales such as the budget he supposedly balanced (he’s yet to do so) and his election “mandate” (most voters marked someone else for governor).

choosing to go the reality route while the governor cavorted in Fantasyland.

For example, every statewide elected official, save Blagojevich, spoke of the need to end the state’s sorry history of political corruption. And in his first official act, new state Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias issued an executive order barring his campaign fund from taking contributions from banks, treasurer’s office employees and contractors doing business with the office. The order also prohibits employees from accepting gifts from lobbyists and imposes a two-year ban on former employees lobbying the office.

“There will be no pay-to-play politics in the treasurer’s office,” declared Giannoulias, the only newcomer among the statewide officers.

The treasurer’s ethics order is patterned

after one issued earlier by state Comptroller Dan Hynes, and the two fiscal officers endorsed legislation that would make it illegal for all officeholders to accept campaign contributions from large contractors.

Hynes also urged state leaders to do “not just what’s convenient in the short term, but what is right in the long term,” on the state’s budget woes, a familiar theme for the third-term comptroller, who last fall predicted that the state’s foreseeable revenue growth for the next few years would be consumed by on-going commitments for pension funding, repaying past borrowing and meeting mushrooming health care costs.

“For too long, government spent money without the slightest concern for the future,” he noted in his inaugural remarks. “The consequences? Those could be put off until the next year, the next administration or the next decade.”

Now the consequences are here, said Hynes, visible in crumbling roads, poor schools and inadequate health care.

Underscoring the point, just a few days before the inauguration, the comptroller reported the state faced a backlog of more than \$1.3 billion in unpaid bills at the end of December, the midpoint for fiscal year 2007, a pattern he said was likely to persist through the next fiscal year, “absent any significant changes.”

But change may be in the offing. Both Democratic legislative leaders, House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate

President Emil Jones Jr., sounded similar fiscal concerns after being re-elected to their posts for the 95th General Assembly.

Citing a report by a group of Chicago business executives that the state "is headed toward financial implosion" with more than \$100 billion in unfunded debt, Madigan declared himself willing to make unpopular choices.

"I am prepared to engage in doing things which today may not be viewed so favorably, but down the road, there will be an acknowledgement it was the right thing to do," said Madigan, who noted pointedly that he has voted both for income tax increases and for major budget cuts in past years.

But Jones argued the state's fiscal woes stem from inadequate revenue, not wasteful spending. Education and health care are the two largest budget items, he said, and neither should be cut. In fact, the Democratic leader wants the state to step in with additional dollars for local schools to remedy what he termed an "outrageous, inequitable" financing

Still, the major obstacle to overhauling the state's revenue structure remains Blagojevich, who repeated his pledge to oppose income or sales tax increases in his Inaugural Address.

system that relies too heavily on property taxes, allowing schools in wealthy areas to spend four or five times as much per student as schools with smaller tax bases.

"A child's education ... should not depend on where the child attends school or where that child is domiciled," declared Jones, a longtime champion of school funding reform.

Still, the major obstacle to overhauling the state's revenue structure remains Blagojevich, who repeated his pledge to oppose income or sales tax increases in

his Inaugural Address. But the governor may find it difficult to deliver on universal health care — a multibillion-dollar commitment — without yielding on the no-tax pledge.

Even without a costly new program, the state will be hard-pressed to meet its obligations next fiscal year, which starts July 1. The required contribution to state retirement systems will jump by more than \$600 million and debt service — loan repayments — will grow by more than \$80 million. And on July 1, Blagojevich will lose his relatively unfettered ability to siphon money from accounts earmarked for specific programs to bolster general state spending, a wind-fall averaging more than \$200 million annually.

One would hope such hard fiscal facts, abetted by legislative resolve, would bring the governor back from the Magic Kingdom. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

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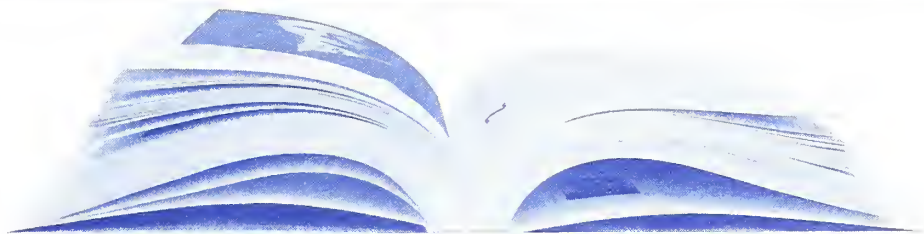
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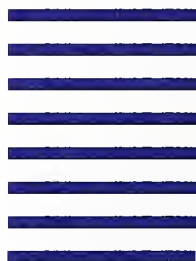
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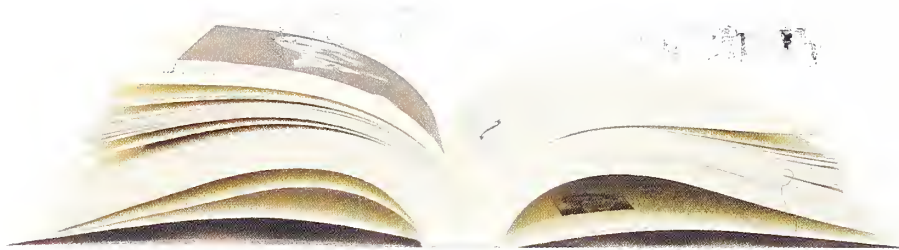
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